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# Challenges of Measuring an Ethnic World

## Science, politics and reality

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Proceedings of the Joint  
Canada-United States  
Conference on the  
Measurement of Ethnicity  
April 1 - 3, 1992

Minister  
responsible for  
Statistics Canada  
STATISTICS  
CANADA

U.S. Department  
of Commerce  
Economics and Statistics  
Administration  
BUREAU OF  
THE CENSUS



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**Dedication**  
**Edward Thomas Pryor**  
**1931-1992**

**This volume is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Edward T. Pryor, a respected and internationally acclaimed sociologist, teacher, demographer and author. Throughout his career he exhibited leadership and unfailing dedication to his profession. His inspiration and guidance were instrumental to the success of this conference.**

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Issued September 1993



Minister responsible for  
Statistics Canada  
Jean J. Charest

STATISTICS CANADA  
Ivan P. Fellegi, Chief Statistician  
of Canada



U.S. Department of Commerce  
Ronald H. Brown, Secretary  
Economics and Statistics Administration  
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS  
Harry A. Scarr, Acting Director



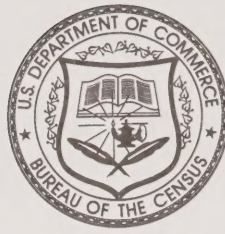


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**Bureau of the Census**  
Nampeo R. McKenney  
Arthur R. Cresce

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The Conference on the Measurement of Ethnicity was the result of efforts of many people at Statistics Canada and the United States Bureau of the Census. We acknowledge the leadership provided by the late **Edward T. Pryor** of Statistics Canada and the support of **William P. Butz** of United States Bureau of the Census. **Gustave J. Goldmann** and **Marcia Almey** of Statistics Canada and **Nampeo R. McKenney** and **Arthur R. Cresce** of the United States Bureau of the Census, organized and managed the conference. We also want to recognize the contribution of **Pamela White** of Statistics Canada who participated in the early stages of organizing the conference. **Nicole Cadieux** of Statistics Canada provided invaluable and unflagging administrative and logistical support; **Carolyn Tillman** and **Linda Chase** of the Bureau of the Census provided invaluable administrative support.

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We express our appreciation to the authors who prepared papers for the conference chairs and discussants of the plenary sessions, and to the rapporteurs who provided excellent syntheses of the major issues. Furthermore, we thank the group leaders who moderated the working group discussions and presented reports at the plenary sessions and persons who served as resource persons for the working group discussions.





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# ***Chairs, Discussants, Moderators and Resource Persons***

Listed below are persons who served in additional roles to ensure the conference's success.

## **SESSION CHAIRS**

John de Vries  
Juanita Lott  
Tom Smith  
Gustave Goldmann  
Mary Waters  
Paula Schneider

## **DISCUSSANTS**

John Samuel  
Reynolds Farley  
John de Vries  
Mary Waters

## **MODERATORS**

Bruce Petrie  
William Butz

## **WORKING GROUP CHAIRS**

### **Impact on Data Needs**

Evelyn Mann  
Henry Der  
Robert Hill  
David Pearce  
Douglas Norris  
Alan Anderson  
Réjean Lachapelle

### **Socio-Political Context**

Matthew Snipp  
Gordon Priest  
John Kromkowski  
Leo Driedger  
Jacques Henripin  
Arthur Cresce  
Sange de Silva  
Roderick Harrison

## **RESOURCE PERSONS**

### **Impact of Data Needs**

Harry Champion  
Tom Caplan  
Diana Harley  
Bali Ram  
Stanley Rolark  
Wally Boxhill  
Ronald Raby

### **Socio-Political Context**

Margaret Michalowski  
Susan Lapham  
Michael Levin  
Matt Salo  
Jean Dumas  
Jane Badets  
Paul McPhie  
Henry Woltman

## **RAPPORTEURS**

Lawrence Bobo

Teresa Sullivan





# *Foreward*

This volume is a record of the Joint Canada-United States Conference on the Measurement of Ethnicity. The idea for the conference was conceived by the late Edward T. Pryor of Statistics Canada and warmly welcomed and supported by William P. Butz of the United States Bureau of the Census.

At Statistics Canada the principal organizers of the conference were Gustave J. Goldmann and Marcia Almey, and at the United States Bureau of the Census they were Nampeo R. McKenney and Arthur Cresce. Nicole Cadieux, Carolyn Tillman and Linda Chase provided unflagging and invaluable support. Many other people at Statistics Canada and the United States Bureau of the Census also contributed to the success of the conference.

The conference was held at Statistics Canada in Ottawa on April 1-3, 1992. It was organized around four aspects of ethnicity and its measurement: the experiences of national statistical agencies, the meanings and dimensions of ethnicity, the impact of data needs on question and questionnaire development, and the socio-political context. The conference concluded with a session on the research and analytical agenda for the future.

All of the invited speakers prepared extensive papers. For the plenary sessions, however, they were asked to give a short presentation on their texts. Every session was followed by open discussion from the floor. During two of the sessions, Impact of Data Needs and the Socio-political Context, the participants were divided into smaller working groups to deal with the topics in greater detail. Each group was asked to address a specific set of issues as well as other significant points related to the topic. The chairs were asked to give a synopsis of the discussions during the plenary sessions which followed. At the conclusion of the conference two rapporteurs, Lawrence Bobo and Teresa Sullivan, provided a summary of the proceedings.

This volume is a record of these proceedings. It is organized into two sections. The first is a summary, by session, of the presentations, working group sessions and the open discussion. The second part includes the full text of all the invited papers.

Since there are differences in American and Canadian spelling and usage of English and rules of grammar, the Canadian practice has, in general, been followed; however, where an author used the American alternative, that has been retained.





# *Executive Summary*

The purpose of the Joint Canada-United States Conference on the Measurement of Ethnicity was to bring together people in government, survey operations, academics and other data users to address the challenges of measuring an ethnic world within the context of science, politics and social reality.

The conference was highly successful. It succeeded in its main objectives: sharing of information and experiences between the United States, Canada, and other countries that collect ethnic data; fostering discussion of mutual problems and issues that affect question development, reporting, data processing and presentation; and proposing and suggesting new initiatives and future approaches in the measurement of ethnicity.

The participants included data users from throughout the United States and Canada, as well as representatives of the national statistical agencies of Australia, Malaysia, the former Soviet Union and the United Kingdom. Experts presented papers that provided insight into the many-faceted meanings and dimensions of ethnicity, as well as the practical issues of the impact of data needs, socio-political issues, and future issues affecting the measurement of ethnicity.

The keynote address was given by Professor Stanley Lieberson of Harvard University. Describing his "Devilish Principles" of census enumeration of racial and ethnic groups, he set the tone for the discussions that followed.

A number of themes and proposals emerged during the conference. Participants reached a number of conclusions about the nature of ethnicity. While these points are addressed in more detail in the papers and in the résumé of discussions in this volume, they are summarized and highlighted here.

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The following represent some fundamental conclusions reached by the conference participants.

- Although a number of theoretical and operational approaches were suggested, the conference participants reached a consensus that there was no universally acceptable definition of ethnicity.
- Ethnicity is dynamic; it is in constant flux. It will change as a result of new immigration flows, blending and intermarriage, and new identities may be formed.
- The census is an appropriate vehicle to collect data on ethnicity. For numerically small groups and small geographic areas, the census is the only instrument that can provide reliable data.



## *Executive Summary*

- Statistical agencies should rethink ethnicity in order to come to grips with its intrinsic malleability, particularly during periods of rapid social change such as the present.
- Ethnicity is a fundamental factor in human life; it is a phenomenon inherent in human experience. Thus, the inherent malleability of ethnicity is not a sufficient reason for statistical agencies to avoid collecting data on ethnicity.
- There was strong support for continued cooperation and sharing of information between the statistical agencies of the United States and Canada. Since the significance of ethnicity is similar in both countries, further cooperation would be of great benefit to all concerned. An example of such collaboration could be a joint Canadian-U.S. survey of Native American populations or First Nation peoples.

---

There were many additional important themes, proposals and conclusions developed at the conference. They are summarized below and organized by the conference's major themes.

## *National Experiences*

- There was general agreement that current national census measures of ethnicity are, to a large extent, determined by the social issues and public policies of each country as well as by the principles of sound social science.
- Similarly, future measures of ethnicity in each country will be influenced by demographic changes, equality issues, legislative requirements and court challenges, as well as by the results of testing programs and research.
- For both the United States Bureau of the Census (USBC) and Statistics Canada there is a need to add questions to the census to gather more extensive and detailed ethnic data: for Canada, more information on race, and for both countries, generation from the immigration event (birthplace of parents).
- The USBC should investigate combining the current three census ethnic-related questions (race, Hispanic origin and ancestry) into a two-part question.
- The majority of the six countries presenting their national experiences have settled on self-identification as the most appropriate method of obtaining ethnicity.

- The six countries had many similar experiences in collecting data on ethnicity, but each also had its own unique experiences reflecting the demographic, social, and political realities of the country.
- Future censuses should include a two-part ethnicity question that would address the dual dimensions of identity and ancestry. The first part would deal with a person's primary identity among the major ethnic groups in a society, while the second would cover ancestry and provide an indicator of an individual's descent or ancestry from among a broad range of ethnic groups.

### *Meanings and Dimensions of Ethnicity*

- Definitions of ethnicity should be consistently employed in data sources such as censuses, surveys and administrative records. Inconsistent definitions of ethnicity in censuses and surveys on the one hand, and administrative record systems on the other, result in numerator-denominator problems when sources of data are combined.
- Ethnicity is continuous; it is a process that goes through the life's cycle.
- Inconsistency in data over time may be a result of the flux in ethnicity rather than flaws in data collection. Statistical agencies should realize that inconsistencies in the data may reflect social reality.
- In the majority of instances, the emergence of states involves numerous ethnic groups, variably related to one another but invariably ranked. The very process of developing complex, differentiated, stable human social systems springs from, or encourages in part, ethnic differentiation and stratification.
- Ethnicity is multidimensional and includes aspects such as race, origin, ancestry, identity, language and religion.
- Statistical agencies should look at new methodologies or new approaches for certain applications to obtain a broader array of data, different definitions or different concepts.

### *Impact of Data Needs*

- Statistical agencies cannot meet all the diverse data needs. Demands for space on the questionnaire and limited resources mean that all data needs can not be met.
- There is a need for a great deal more testing and experimenting with different questions and combinations of questions and items.



## *Executive Summary*

- Supplementary questions should be added for certain areas to meet special data needs. This could include more detailed information on Native Americans, Hispanics or other subpopulations enumerated by the census.
- More research should be done on the impact of data collection on stereotypes and divisiveness. At the present time, social science literature has minimal systematic analysis of this topic.
- There was a division among the participants about the inclusion of the traditional question on race in censuses and surveys. Some argue that the racial question is divisive and is not appropriate to address some of the issues and data needs. Others asserted that race was needed to address issues of racism and discrimination. There was general agreement that some data were needed to address issues pertaining to the groups traditionally identified on the race question.
- Multiple ethnicities are acceptable. There were differences in views about a category for persons of mixed racial parentage. Some argued that this is a new emerging group, part of the ethnic flux. Others suggested that questions on origin and ancestry are adequate for identifying persons of mixed parentage.
- Comparability between censuses was a desired goal but given the dynamic nature of ethnicity, it is much more important to reflect changes in society as they occur.
- Constitutional and legislative needs must be given priority in the collection of data on ethnicity. Needs of community, research, academia, business, ethnic and other non-profit groups should be considered.

## *Socio-political Context*

- Concerns were raised over the issue of access to data, and the increasing divide between groups and individuals who can afford data and data analysis and those who cannot. Some participants feared that racial and ethnic groups were being separated into technological "haves" and "have-nots."
- The uses of the data received considerable attention. Participants pointed out that race and ethnicity data are not neutral and can be used for many purposes, some of which may not be benign.
- Statistical agencies should consult with a wide variety of stakeholders. Greater consultations are needed with groups at the very earliest stages of planning and subsequent critical stages.

- Declining literacy poses problems for the ethnicity question. Questions need considerable testing to ensure that respondents understand the questions and categories.
- Some participants believed that the ethnicity questions in the next census will be more controversial.

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The major proposals on future issues affecting the measurement of ethnicity that emerged during the last session of the conference were incorporated in fundamental conclusions and major themes, shown above. Additional information on the general themes and conclusions of the conference are provided in the excellent summaries by the conference rapporteurs, Lawrence Bobo and Teresa Sullivan.





# *Opening Remarks*

**Ivan P. Fellegi**

**Chief Statistician, Statistics Canada**

Good Morning Ladies and Gentlemen. It is my pleasure to welcome you to Statistics Canada and to this Conference on the Measurement of Ethnicity. We in Statistics Canada are very pleased to collaborate with our colleagues from the U.S. Bureau of the Census in sponsoring this event.

Canada has long been a country characterized by the ethnic and cultural diversity of its population. Our two official languages and our official policy of multiculturalism, to say nothing of our continuing constitutional debates involving language, aboriginal and other issues, attest to the significance of ethnicity in Canada today. The presence here of such a large and distinguished group of leaders in the field of demographics and population research is proof of the importance of ethnic issues not only in Canada but around the world.

A decade ago, one might have asked if ethnicity were not a dead – or at least a dormant – issue for the many countries world-wide which apparently had succeeded in uniting diverse nationalities and cultures under a single flag or joint economic system. However, recent developments familiar to all of you – in Eastern Europe, in the Middle-East, in the Indian sub-continent, in Canada and indeed throughout the world – highlight the continuing and pervasive influence of ethnic origins and identities on our evolving world.

What does this mean for those of us charged with the measurement of ethnicity? It is clear that our society will continue to face complex and difficult issues related to the ethnic and cultural backgrounds of its members. We as statisticians, demographers, sociologists and researchers in a variety of other disciplines will be expected to help shed light on these issues so that they can be better understood by both the general public and the leaders of our ethnic and cultural groups, business community organizations and governments. This will not be an easy task.

Indeed, the difficulty of the challenge seems to be increasing. We at Statistics Canada have a long history of measuring ethnicity in our Census of Population but, as you will hear later today, in our most recent census we encountered more problems than ever before in dealing with this topic. Notwithstanding an extraordinarily extensive round of consultation with interested groups and individuals in preparation for the census, we had great difficulty in reaching consensus on the questions to be included on the census questionnaire.

After much deliberation, we opted to use the same question we had asked successfully in the previous census five years earlier, namely a direct question on ethnic or cultural ancestry. This time, however, we touched a raw nerve in the country. No doubt the preceding years of debate on our constitution, on free trade, on a national sales tax, on aboriginal issues (including an



## *Opening Remarks*

internationally-publicized armed confrontation) had helped set the stage. Whatever the reason, many Canadians chose to view the census not just as another national snapshot but as an occasion to express their national **identity**. They wanted to call themselves Canadian and, for reasons my colleagues will clarify later, we heartless statisticians had not listed Canadian as an answer category on the ethnic origin question!

I am sure that many of you recognize and perhaps even share this dilemma or some close approximation of it and understand that ethnic identification of respondents is not merely measured in numbers or multiple responses of ancestry. It is tied up with feelings — the emotional ties to culture, to heritage, to language, to place and time that cannot be accommodated by a simple mark-box on a census form. Our collective experience in dealing with this complexity, both as data producers and data users, will no doubt provide the basis for some animated discussion over the next few days.

Galina Bondarskaya, of the Research Institute of Statistics of the State Committee of the Russian Federation, will be sharing with us her views of the impact of the rising ethnic consciousness that has been a catalyst for such dramatic change in her homeland.

In Australia, as we will hear from John Cornish, Head of the Queensland Office of the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the national statistical agency chose not to measure ethnicity in its 1991 population census. On the other hand, the recent Census of Great Britain did include questions on both ethnicity and race. David Pearce and Philip White, from the Office of Population Census and Surveys, are here to discuss the U.K. experience.

The very complex cultural mix of Malaysia poses unique concerns for their demographers and Mr. Khoo, Chief Statistician of Malaysia, will tell us about the issues in his country.

Joining us as co-sponsors of this conference are Barbara Bryant, Director of the U.S. Bureau of the Census, and Associate Director, William Butz. Two years ago today, they were conducting the most recent Census of the United States. Their results have already revealed new trends in the growth and distribution of ethnic groups in the U.S. and we can look forward to a firsthand account of their experience.

And to set the stage for our discussions and our exchange of experiences, Dr. Stanley Lieberson, Professor of Sociology at Harvard University and President of the American Sociological Association, will deliver our keynote address and provide us with an overall perspective for the study and measurement of ethnicity.

The issues you will be debating during the next three days are indeed complex and important. Few would dispute that data on ethnicity can be used to the considerable benefit of society, whether for developing and monitoring the success of programs designed to combat

discrimination and provide equality of opportunity, to enhance school curricula, to conduct health research and improve the delivery of basic health care information or other such laudable ends. But our experience also shows that the same data can be used in more controversial ways. For example, serious objections have been raised to the linking of data on ethnic origin and crime or on ethnic origin and income. Do the potential misuses or misinterpretations override the potential for good that can be derived from collecting such data? Is it, on balance, preferable not to collect such information? Over the course of these meetings we will have the opportunity to explore these questions and more in a forum of intellectually stimulating discussions.

The vision for this meeting came two years ago from Dr. Edward Pryor, the Director General of the Census and Demographic Statistics Branch here at Statistics Canada, and the man who has been instrumental to the success of the last five national censuses conducted in Canada. In preparing for the 1991 Census, Dr. Pryor recognized that the collection of data on ethnicity presented concerns that far outreached our borders and had global implications. History over the past two years has proved him to be – not surprisingly for those of us who know Ed well – prophetic. Regrettably, illness prevents Dr. Pryor from attending this meeting but he has asked me to convey his best wishes and thanks to all of you for your participation and to tell you that he is looking forward eagerly to learning the results of your deliberations.

Let me conclude, then, by expressing my personal thanks and appreciation for your participation in this conference. I and my colleagues here at Statistics Canada certainly will profit from your discussions but the ultimate beneficiaries, of course, will be the great many people who depend on us for information on ethnicity.

**Barbara E. Bryant**  
**Director, United States Bureau of the Census**

Bonjour, nous de Census Bureau des Etats Unis sont heureux d'être ici. It is appropriate that Statistics Canada and the United States Bureau of the Census co-sponsor this conference. We are both nations in which the vast majority of us are immigrants or the descendants of immigrants. Neither of our nations is a melting pot; rather, both of our nations are mosaics. We had plenty of proof of this in the 1990 Census in the United States; we hired enumerators who spoke 52 languages to complete the count in New York City and 26 languages in the San Francisco Bay area, even though many of our racial and ethnic groups are English-speaking.

In our censuses and surveys, respondent's ethnicity is what he/she says it is and that, of course, makes the challenge of measuring ethnicity both interesting and complex. I now have a six-month-old granddaughter who is Chinese-American and I don't know how her parents will designate her primary race in the Census 2000 and I am the Director of the Census Bureau.



## *Opening Remarks*

The purpose of this conference is to bring together those in government, survey and research organizations and academia. There is a diverse group of data users here to discuss current and future issues in the field of ethnic measurement.

This conference stemmed from a joint presentation made at the 1990 meetings of the Population Association of America (PAA) which was held in Toronto. At that meeting, the Census Bureau staff presented its experiences in developing the ethnic, primarily the ancestry, questions in censuses and surveys. Statistics Canada provided reactions to our presentations and related their experiences. We found that indeed the two countries had a great deal in common measuring ethnicity. We faced similar issues in developing data on ethnic groups. Well, Edward T. Pryor of Statistics Canada deserves most of the credit for conceiving the idea of the conference at the PAA and discussing it with William (Bill) Butz of the Census Bureau. After the PAA, both Ed and Bill provided resources for the conference; and Ed was involved in all stages of planning this event.

The Census Bureau and Statistics Canada invited you to participate in this conference because you are experts on ethnicity. We are very pleased that so many of you have accepted our mutual invitation. Now we have structured the conference to allow for as much discussion and interacting as possible. The success of this conference depends on your participation. We think the conference will provide insights and recommendations that will help both of our organizations in planning for future censuses and surveys. And we see this conference as the foundation for continued cooperation between the Bureau of the Census and Statistics Canada in the development of data on ethnicity.

Besides thanking Ed Pryor of Statistics Canada and William Butz of the Census Bureau for their leadership, I would also like to thank Gustave Goldmann and Marcia Almey of Statistics Canada and Nampeo McKenney and Arthur Cresce of the Bureau of the Census who worked so well together to plan and to make this three-day event happen. And finally I would like to thank Statistics Canada for hosting us in this beautiful facility.

# Part I





# ***1. Introduction***

**William P. Butz**

**Gustave J. Goldmann**

**with Contribution of Susan Lapham**

This volume contains proceedings of the Conference on Measurement of Ethnicity held at Statistics Canada, Ottawa, between April 1 and 3, 1992. In conceiving the conference, Edward Pryor, Director General, Census and Demographic Statistics, Statistics Canada, and William Butz, Associate Director for Demographic Programs, Bureau of the Census, intended to bring together eminent scholars, government researchers, community leaders and members of national ethnic organizations. While it would have been ideal to have had many experts in attendance, logistics led the organizers to invite a few people who had a broad knowledge of ethnicity. We wanted to create a forum for discussion of global, national and community issues surrounding the measurement of ethnicity. As a result, we invited statistical agencies from several countries, as well as academics, government statisticians and policy makers from Canada and the United States to discuss their own national experiences, the meanings and dimensions of ethnicity, socio-political issues related to ethnicity, the impact of data needs and future issues affecting the measurement of ethnicity.

For this conference, we used the term ethnicity in its broader sense to include race, ancestry, identity, origin, birthplace, parental birthplace, language and mother tongue. In no sense do the papers collected in this volume represent every theoretical, social or political view of ethnic measurement. Nevertheless, the conference was a historic event, bringing together this impressive array of experts on ethnicity. These experts addressed the most central themes concerning the measurement of ethnicity.

During the past three decades, ethnicity in Canada and the United States has re-emerged as a dramatic presence. Parliamentary or legislative program requirements set the basic need for ethnic information in both countries but emerging private uses are also important. Civil rights legislation, judicial decisions and executive orders have renewed interest in, and controversy about, the measurement and collection of ethnic data. Although both countries have collected information on some aspect of ethnicity for two centuries, the measures are inconsistent. Canada has included a question on the ethnic or cultural origins of the population in every post-Confederation decennial census except 1891. The questions have evolved over time to reflect the changing composition of Canadian society. The United States has included inquiries about race in all censuses since the first in 1790. The Census Bureau introduced a question on Hispanic origin in 1970. For the first time in 1980, the United States census asked a direct question about ancestry or ethnic origin of the entire population.

Experience shows that fuzzy definitions and group boundaries, changing terminologies, poor reliability and lack of knowledge of the degree of affiliation with a group make data collection

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difficult. No objective standard guides the consistent and reliable measurement of a person's ethnicity. As a result, scholars vary widely in their definition of ethnicity. For example, Isajiw (1974) found 27 definitions of ethnicity in his review of 65 sociological and anthropological studies. He identified 12 different attributes or dimensions of ethnicity. Examples of these attributes were common national or geographic origin or common ancestors, the same culture, religion, racial or physical characteristics and language (1974, 117).

## *Origins of the conference*

The 1990 Population Association of America meetings in Toronto, Canada, provided a timely forum for comparing and contrasting the United States and Canadian experiences in collecting information on ethnicity. McKenney and Cresce's paper (1990) "The Identification of Ethnicity in the United States: The Census Experience" led Pamela White (Statistics Canada) to note several similarities in her discussion. For example, both Canada's ethnic origin and the United State's ancestry questions produce data that are difficult to analyze; both countries have users who dispute classification and coding schemes for ethnic groups; both have emerging ethnic groups such as "Canadian" or "American"; both Canada and the United States have substantial aboriginal or native populations; and both have large and growing immigrant populations. Elaboration of these similarities called for a longer discussion than was possible during the 1990 Population Association meetings. In particular, the organizers thank Edward Pryor whose foresight led to the organization of the conference. After the 1990 Population Association meetings, Pryor immediately proposed the idea of a conference on the measurement of ethnicity. He provided important resources and was involved in all stages of the conference. As a result Statistics Canada and the Census Bureau succeeded in bringing together people in government, survey operations, academics and other data users to discuss current and future issues in ethnic measurement.

## *Objectives of the conference*

The Conference on the Measurement of Ethnicity provided a unique forum for a comprehensive presentation, initial assessment and opportunity for dialogue about various measures of ethnicity. The three goals of the conference were: 1) to discuss methodological, conceptual, socio-political, technical and operational issues common to both the United States and Canada; 2) to share experiences of other countries; and 3) to suggest future approaches for measuring ethnicity.

Since similar issues have arisen in several countries, speakers from the following countries presented papers describing their experiences: Australia (John Cornish), Malaysia (Teik Huat Khoo), the Soviet Union (Galina Bondarskaya) and the United Kingdom (Philip H. White and David L. Pearce), as well as Canada (Pamela White and Viviane Renaud) and the United States (Nanpeo McKenney and Arthur Cresce). The comments by the discussants P. John Samuel



and Reynolds Farley and the collective experiences of the participants in dealing with ethnicity, both as data producers and as data users, provided animated discussions.

### *Challenges: Present and Future*

Recent developments in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, the former Soviet Union, the Indian Subcontinent, Africa, Latin America and, indeed, throughout the world highlight the continuing and pervasive influence of ethnic origins and identities. Statistical agencies have difficulty interpreting ethnicity from numbers or responses to census questions. Ethnic identity is an emotionally charged issue, tied to culture, heritage, race, language, birthplace, social standing and religion. In his keynote address, Stanley Lieberman suggested several "Devilish Principles" about the enumeration of racial and ethnic groups in a census. First, censuses have long found it difficult to measure ethnicity. Second, an inherent clash exists between ethnic groups and organizations that produce censuses. Race and ethnic relations are usually changing in a society, sometimes very slowly and at other times rather rapidly. However, censuses measure the groups with an instrument that is likely to be slow in responding to these shifts. Third, there is no clean and consistent definition of the groups that are enumerated. Fourth, individual groups will differ on the racial and ethnic questions that are most desirable from their point of view. Finally, an ethnic group is not the same as the people in the group. Lieberman's principles provided a foundation for the conference.

The three-day conference focused on the most salient of Lieberman's themes. The setting allowed participants to transcend national boundaries and discuss issues on a global level. The sharing of national experiences in the measurement of ethnicity was the focus of Day One. After some welcoming (Ivan P. Fellegi, Chief Statistician of Canada) and introductory remarks (Barbara E. Bryant, Director, Census Bureau), government experts from Australia, Canada, Malaysia, the former Soviet Union<sup>1</sup>, the United Kingdom and the United States gave overviews of their own experiences in collecting information on ethnicity. Representatives provided brief histories of data collection, factors affecting the development of ethnic questions, evaluation of data derived from ethnic questions, how census or survey questions on ethnicity relate to concepts of ethnicity and issues that each country must address to meet the demand for ethnic data in the future.

The presentations by the national statistical agencies illustrated very effectively the complexity and impact of the issues that affect the collection of data on ethnicity. All the agencies represented at the conference devoted considerable effort to planning and testing questions used to collect the data. In many countries the preparatory process included extensive consultations with special interest groups, with researchers and other experts and with major clients of the data. The experiences of national agencies suggested that concerns raised during the preparatory stages of censuses focused on the following issues:

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- The existence of multiple ethnicities is not disputed. However, how does this influence the responses provided by the population? Also, should the collection instruments reflect this dimension of ethnicity?
- Ethnic identity and ethnic ancestry are different measures. Which is more appropriate for a census?
- Data collection instruments and procedures have changed over time. This introduces a discontinuity in the data. To what extent should historical continuity of the time series determine the design of the collection instrument?
- Should national statistical agencies collect data on the race of an individual? If so, what is the impact on society when censuses produce racial classifications?

These issues provided the basic stimulus for questions considered by the two series of working group discussions.

Presenters for Day Two of the conference provided a multidisciplinary theoretical foundation. The session focused on the meanings and dimensions of ethnicity, as well as practical issues on data needs and the socio-political context of ethnic data collection. The morning session on the "Meanings and Dimensions of Ethnicity" posed questions such as the meaning of race, whether reliable data can be collected using operational definitions of ethnicity, whether national statistical agencies can design questions to reflect the changing nature of ethnicity and whether censuses can measure ethnicity adequately. Ronald Cohen, Calvin Goldscheider and Wsevolod Isajiw presented papers in this session chaired by John de Vries.

Ethnicity and race are key factors in the study and analysis of the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the population. It is equally true that changes in the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the population help to shape their ethnic profile. Goldscheider proposed the following question to frame the analysis of ethnicity: "What are the contexts that reinforce ethnic/racial distinctiveness and which are most likely to minimize or reduce racial/ethnic differences?".

One must consider the historical context that strongly affects the classification of ethnic groups and the categorizing of people into these groups. However, other factors suggest we must consider the current and future context as well. These factors include changes in the socio-economic and demographic conditions, the influence of racial and ethnic institutions and the changing boundaries of ethnic groups. Definitions of the boundaries may change over time or they may actually fade. For example, new groups are created as the rates of intermarriage between different ethnicities increase. The fading of the boundaries increases through



generations. This supports the observation made by Goldscheider and Isajiw that ethnic/racial distinctions are dynamic.

Cohen notes that the study of ethnicity is more challenging because there now exist very few uniethnic states. They are the exception rather than the rule. This presents two problems. First, how do you measure multiple ethnicities and second, how do you classify people from multi-ethnic societies? To measure a characteristic of the population, it is paramount that the characteristic be defined. Furthermore, a common understanding of the definition must exist. Wsevolod Isajiw proposed a definition of ethnicity and a framework to explain its variants.

Many factors affect the collection of data on ethnicity. In most instances the national census is the primary collection instrument. However, Goldscheider noted that the instruments we use today present static views of ethnicity and they favor objective measures. Conference participants considered the possibility of reflecting the dynamic nature of ethnicity and including subjective measures such as identity.

Papers in the second session of the day, "Impact of Data Needs", addressed the need for information on ethnicity in a statistical organization. Among the issues: how an organization deals with diverse users' data needs as they affect content development or question wording; how the organization meets the data needs of the target population groups; and the historical comparability of ethnic data. Madeleine Gagné, Gustave Goldmann and Jorge del Pinal presented papers in this session chaired by Juanita Lott.

In the third session, "Socio-Political Context", we discussed issues such as: how changing social and political environments affect the collection of data on ethnicity; what impact rising ethnic consciousness, changing national boundaries, multicultural policy and target group legislation have on racial and ethnic classifications; and how immigration status, intermarriage, successive generations of residence in a country and cultural differences affect data needs. Leo Estrada and Audrey Kobayashi presented papers in this session chaired by Tom Smith.

Day two and part of day three featured working group sessions on the measurement of ethnicity and, in particular, how data needs and the socio-political context affect the design of questionnaires and the collection and interpretation of data. Several working groups met concurrently and each addressed a set of core issues. In addition, each working group dealt with at least one supplementary issue.

Core issues for the working groups on the impact of data needs included: legislative, programmatic, research and community data needs; providing a definition of ethnicity, race, ancestry and identity; and whether the census is an appropriate vehicle to collect these data. Supplementary issues included whether statistical agencies should meet all data needs, how the collection of data reinforces stereotypes and divisiveness, who is consulted to determine data



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needs, whether comparability over time is more important than relevance at a given time and whether the issue of multiple ethnicities is resolvable.

Core issues for the working groups on socio-political context included the feasibility of getting reliable data on race and ethnicity when racial and ethnic identities are changing; the quality of data; the effect of geographical and cultural factors on quality, whether political or legal definitions determined the racial/ethnic classifications; the extent that political pressure affects ethnicity and the balance between political forces and research. In addition, discussions involved whether race or ethnicity is a more appropriate concept to use; whether unclear boundaries between ethnic groups are affecting classification; the impact of the respondent's perceptions on data quality; and whether data on race and ethnic groups are too political for analysis.

Supplemental issues included how statistical agencies could inform users about the complexity of measuring race and ethnicity; how the changing political structure of the world affects data collection; whether racial/ethnic categories should be influenced by demographic factors such as immigration; how data on ethnicity should be connected to the justice system; and whether or not data on ethnicity should be connected to health statistics.

Debates surrounding the collection and application of ethnic data have raised sensitivities concerning what the data mean, whether or not to collect data and what impact data have on society. For instance, to develop the question(s) on ethnicity, a statistical agency must consider the quality of the data, users' needs, sensitivities of the ethnic communities, political environments and processing constraints. This, of course, presupposes that everyone involved has agreed on exactly which aspect of ethnicity is measured; that is, identity, ancestry or race.

Publishing socio-economic and demographic characteristics cross-classified by ethnicity may promote or reinforce stereotypes in literature and the media. Comparisons of socio-economic achievement between ethnic groups lend themselves to rankings, thereby creating the potential for creating stereotypes such as: "most.....are wealthy" or "most.....are criminals" or "most.....are ignorant or illiterate". History provides ample evidence of the creation and use of such stereotypes. However, should the potential for misuse of data influence data collection? This was a concern among the conference participants who addressed the issue during floor discussions and working group sessions.

Analysts, social planners and policy makers need to consider which constituency pressures apply in a particular instance since few uniethnic societies exist. This is, in part, dictated by the ideology of society. For example, in the United States the model tends towards the assimilation of ethnic groups into the overall society. In Canada the model tends towards promoting multiculturalism. Conference participants made no value judgement on which approach is more appropriate for a given society. However, the social ideology has significant bearing on the collection of ethnic data and on their application.

In the second session on the third day of the conference, chaired by Mary Waters, the future was considered. Monica Boyd and Charles Hirschman presented papers providing suggestions and recommendations regarding the future measurement of ethnicity. They and other conference participants discussed how the measurement of ethnicity may change. At this session and, indeed throughout the conference, participants made it clear that ethnic identification is a continuous process that goes on throughout the life cycle. People's identities may change as they age. Gender affects identification. There is ethnic mobility. Whole groups may break off and re-identify themselves or they may move back and forth from one group to another. Ethnicity is multidimensional, including race, origin, ancestry, religion, language, mother tongue, birthplace and culture. Discussions about reducing the empirical complexity of ethnicity pointed to the need for assessing ethnic measurement in the broader context of social, political, economic and demographic change.

## *Conclusion*

During the final session Paula Schneider led an open discussion on topics that emerged over the three day conference. Lawrence Bobo and Teresa Sullivan served as rapporteurs to provide an outstanding summary, with commentary, on what had transpired during the three days of the conference.

The general charge of the conference was to deal with the current and future issues in the measurement of ethnicity. Conference participants felt that the conference was highly successful and provided a better understanding of the complexity of measuring the science, politics and reality of an ethnic world. The participants' stimulating discussions of the complex issues and challenges posed by ethnicity and candid discussions of controversial issues in a global context, as well as the resolve to continue discussions on an international level, were evidence of a successful conference.

## *Note*

1. The former Soviet Union is now referred to as the following geopolitical entities: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.





## ***2. The Enumeration of Ethnic and Racial Groups in the Census: Some Devilish Principles***

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### ***Introduction***

I wish to suggest some propositions about the enumeration of racial and ethnic groups in the census. Since I do not know whether they are right or wrong or if they apply to more than one nation's census, I will call these Devilish Principles. If they are correct, then they are principles and I hope you will spell my name correctly in citing them. If they are wrong, then I am just being a devil's advocate, so no harm is done.

### ***An Old Story***

The first Principle is that censuses have long found it difficult to enumerate ethnicity (in using the term "ethnicity" I will include race and other related attributes). This is a serious problem at present and it is affected by contemporary events, but difficulty in ascertaining ethnicity is not a new problem and it therefore reflects forces that are not idiosyncratic to our own times. What follows are some examples.

In a report on the 1931 Census of British Malaya, C.A. Vlieland (1958) describes the difficulty in ascertaining race. He describes the procedure of first delineating six main racial groups: "Europeans (including Americans and all White races), Eurasians, Malaysians, Chinese, Indians, and 'Others'". These are, in turn, subdivided into over 70 races. From a current viewpoint, the latter step is unusual. But it is not unlikely that present practices will appear equally odd 60 years from now. This matter I will address later. The special difficulty in classifying the Chinese in Malaysia should strike a familiar note for those addressing contemporary classification problems, even if it involves different groups:

The classification of Chinese is a matter of considerable difficulty, and whatever list of divisions is adopted, the census authority can not hope to escape a considerable measure of expert criticism. The writer's plea is that the classification adopted in this report represents a tolerable compromise between the conflicting views of different authorities who were consulted and the practical considerations which weighed with him as the authority responsible for the census. The classification is admittedly based on an inconsistent blend of political, geographic and linguistic, rather than ethnographic

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criteria, but is intended to reflect those broad divisions with which a non-specialist administrator is mainly concerned in Malaya (542-43).

Then he goes on to describe problems with Asian Indians in Malaya as well. All of this should sound familiar to you; the groups may be different but it is the same story. The census authority cannot hope to escape a considerable measure of expert criticism, as he/she endeavors to "blend" a variety of criteria to meet the diverse concerns of the users.

Calvin Beale (1958), writing about the enumeration of mixed blood racial groups in the 1950 U.S. Census, particularly in the South, concludes:

In view of the wide variation in race status found among the mixed bloods, and the changing status of some groups, it is the writer's opinion that no overall instruction regarding their classification in the census can be effective. Separate instructions can be effectively issued in certain areas, but problems of race classification promise to vex census takers and demographers for many years to come (540).

There are other early examples of ethnic difficulties in official statistics. Everett C. Hughes (1958) studied the delineation of race in German statistical yearbooks before and during the Nazi era. Both the conception of race and the classification of Jews shift radically. In the pre-Nazi yearbooks, "race" is about stallions; and there is a religious category called Israelites (546). Thus, for example, there are data on Israelite-Protestant marriages as there are for Catholic-Protestant marriages. A variety of changes occurred during the Nazi era, culminating in a racial reclassification such that Israelites are no longer listed with other religions. Instead, there is a racial classification with information on Jews, Jewish mixtures of the first degree and Jewish mixtures of the second degree.

According to Dudley Kirk's superb study of *Europe's Population in the Interwar Years* (1946), concern about ethnicity intensified in many nations after the Versailles Treaty brought the First World War to an end. In turn, this affected the enumeration of ethnic groups in various European censuses between the two wars. Kirk points to a variety of enumeration problems, focusing particularly on the biases and distortions that reflect efforts to increase the size of some groups and decrease the size of others. For example, languages that were arguably separable were combined as if they were one tongue (and hence one ethnic group), whereas artificial divisions are introduced in other circumstances to minimize the size of the group. Kirk observes:

Under such circumstances census figures on ethnic composition are inevitably weighted in favor of the dominant nationality. Questions are customarily phrased so as to favor the dominant group and in their replies many doubtful, borderline persons of double language or mixed nationality find it convenient to identify themselves with the dominant

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element. The political and economic advantages of belonging to the majority group undoubtedly result in an exaggeration of the percentage of that element in the reported census distribution, entirely aside from the manipulations of the central statistical offices (1946, 223).

Kirk then observes that minorities and their spokespersons, in the course of taking issue with official figures, commonly make excessive claims in the opposite direction.

A major paper by Petersen (1969) relates to Kirk's thesis. In an attempt generalize about factors influencing the way censuses classify ethnic and racial groups, Petersen demonstrates how the delineations reflect the concerns and perspective of the dominant group(s). I believe one could now propose a different thesis, in the opposite direction, such that subordinate groups are specially likely to affect how they are delineated by the census. We will get to that soon.

Distortions stemming simply from either respondent errors or enumeration procedures are also not new. Fellegi (1964) describes an experiment with the 1961 Canadian Census, such that respondents are asked the same set of questions by different enumerators. The largest variability in responses were on questions dealing with: ethnic group, mother tongue and official language – particularly ethnic group. "These questions are quite emotionally charged in Canada, and as it turns out, the interviewers did not seem to be detached" (1037). In terms of respondent distortions, Ryder (1955) was able to demonstrate that Canada's opposition to Germany in the Second World War led to a massive decline in the German ethnic response among Canadians, accompanied by an increase in the number reporting Dutch ancestry.

In summary, these examples demonstrate that census difficulties in enumerating ethnic groups are not particularly new. They reflect a variety of problems: sometimes it is uncertainty about how a handful of questions (that must be easily coded) can gauge a complex set of delineations in a satisfactory way. The ethnic mixes that normally ensue after contact do not make the task any easier. Often, even experts will not agree among themselves on the most reasonable and appropriate ways of delineating the groups. On top of this, there are political and social pressures operating which impact on both what can be asked and what is asked. Perhaps in an earlier period these pressures stemmed primarily from the dominant group and the government. Now these pressures arise from more diverse sources and governments are, appropriately, less likely to ignore the concerns of subordinate groups on this matter. Finally – even if there is full agreement on the conceptualizations and appropriate concerns – the intense feelings that respondents sometimes have about this topic, as well as certain inherent ambiguities, may distort the actual enumeration results.



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### *An inherent clash between the nature of censuses and the nature of ethnic relations*

A second Devilish Principle is that an inherent clash exists between the nature of ethnic relations and the typical orientation of organizations that produce censuses. There is usually a dynamic set of processes operating for racial and ethnic groups. The groups keep changing after they migrate, or are conquered, or otherwise brought into contact with other populations. The categories change, the membership changes, boundaries shift, conceptualizations are altered, there are mixed marriages, the categories themselves shift and new delineations occur. (Note that these changes are not the same as what ensues from simple assimilation such that social, economic or cultural attributes change in a certain direction for a fixed category of people.)

The U.S. race question illustrates how inadequately these dynamics are enumerated by the census. The question does not allow for hybridized offspring representing two groups, even in such circumstances where we know that very high levels of intermarriage, as between various Asian groups and White segments of our American population, will lead to persons for whom a single answer may be increasingly inappropriate. Since there is no room there for that kind of mix – the question allows for only a single response – we can conclude in this case that racial and ethnic events in the United States have moved ahead faster than have the census procedures for dealing with the consequences of these dynamic events. The race question used in the United States stems from an out-of-date concept (where Chinese, Japanese, Guamanians, etc. are each classified as separate "races") but it did adequately serve many purposes. So in a different period this would have been a relatively minor issue.

Now there are rapid changes following a stretch in which there were relatively slow-moving shifts in the ethnic/racial categories. I will not even get into the question of whether it is appropriate to use the term race for such groups as Chinese, Japanese and Koreans. Obviously, it is no more appropriate than labeling Swedes, Greeks, Poles and Germans as different races. In addition, a substantial segment of the Hispanic population of the United States has shifted its racial response in the last two censuses. They have moved from describing themselves as "White" on the race question to using none of the existing racial categories. In its most general sense, what we witness is a changing meaning and criterion used for a given concept – even one such as race – as well as what peoples are to be so labeled (see Pitt-Rivers 1977).

Certainly both Canada and the United States have had, and will continue to experience, periods in which social delineations change so rapidly that old questions and categories are insufficient to deal with new responses. I would speculate that the difficulty stems from the following: census-taking organizations are cautious and not readily inclined towards making changes in either the questions or their coded responses. The organization in each country is likely to be conservative; there will be a preference, when in doubt, to use the existing question. When there is unavoidable doubt or pressure about the existing procedure, then the tendency will be to modify (if at all possible) an existing question. If this is impossible and no recourse is

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available, a new question is introduced. There is good reason for this sequence. Most of us like to have continuity in our data. I have no doubt that a changed question would lead to considerable controversy when users realize they cannot continue to employ an existing data set. Furthermore, even relatively modest changes create confusion for census users. The 1910 and 1920 Censuses of the United States, for example, defined mother tongue for the second generation as the language spoken in the foreign homes of their parents. By contrast, mother tongue for the second generation in 1940 is defined as the principal language spoken at home of the respondents themselves. This change in definition even confused the Census Bureau as they misinterpreted the apparent sizable decline in non-English mother tongues between 1940 and the earlier decades (see Kiser 1956, 314). The Canadian census also shifted its definition of mother tongue, albeit with probably a modest impact on continuity of the time series (Lieberson 1970, 17).

There is a certain amount of experience that develops when a census uses a question repeatedly. The question and its response categories are reasonably debugged. Even though various pilot studies usually precede the introduction of a new question, nobody knows exactly what will happen in the full-scale census. As a consequence, users of the new question may be unhappy with it and users of a dropped question may be even more unhappy.

In essence, race and ethnic relations are usually changing in a society, sometimes very slowly and at other times rather rapidly. However, the groups are measured by an instrument that – for good reason – is likely to be slow in responding to these shifts.

### *The ambiguity of racial and ethnic groups: separating technical from substantive problems*

Another Principle stems from a strange fact, namely there is no clean and consistent definition of the groups that are to be enumerated. To be sure, there is an abundance of definitions of ethnicity. In a graduate seminar, students and I recently reviewed a small part of this literature, finding many authors prepared to critique other works and then offering the real definition. There is no clean definition that is of universal utility in guiding enumeration procedures. It is very difficult to use the same concept for all places and there are changes over time within each setting. We can learn from what other countries do but each historical context is somewhat distinctive. The groups are in flux – sometimes changing slowly, sometime radically. This, in turn, leads to the following Principle: although it is very difficult to develop a totally satisfactory and "crystal clear" conception of ethnicity and race, we can expect a working approach that is at least reasonable for the specific time and place. We can ask for clarity in what is to be enumerated and how it is done. In turn, this means that both the census and the consumers of census data on ethnicity have to distinguish between technical and substantive "errors" about ethnicity in a census.



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There are technical errors in the data on racial and ethnic groups generated by such factors as: poorly conceived items; ambiguously stated questions; inadequate options for the respondents to check off; intentional distortions by the respondents; and coding difficulties. On the other hand, there are "errors" which are caused not by technical problems but rather reflect substantive processes and events. Suppose, for example, parents differ between themselves on the ethnicity they would attribute to their offspring or that children of mixed parentage themselves fluctuate in how they describe themselves or suppose a single broad category gradually replaces several narrower ethnic categories or suppose age influences ethnic responses such that people shift during their life course or even imagine a situation in which one's ethnic response is altered by the ethnic origins of one's spouse or by the ethnic distribution at work or in the residential neighborhood. None of these are unimaginable processes. I would say, however, that it is very hard for census organizations to deal with such substantive "errors". After all, it is always appropriate to worry about validity and consistency. Yet, it is in the nature of race and ethnic relations, particularly during periods of sudden change, for such patterns to occur for no other reason than they reflect ongoing shifts.

If there had been a census through the centuries in what is now England, imagine the problems that would have been faced in enumerating ethnicity. Along the way Celts, Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Normans, Romans and other groups somehow merged and formed a population we now identify as the English. Certainly, in some periods there would have been severe technical problems for census takers worrying about an ethnicity question; in other periods it would have been relatively easy. With the benefit of a broad historical overview, the merging of peoples whom we now know as the English would be obvious. From the limited perspective of censuses taken every ten (or five) years, however, these shifts would appear to the census takers as unmitigated mayhem, with many uncooperative respondents vacillating in their responses either from census to census or from parent to child. Certainly, the ethnic item(s) would be a mess! It would be a tragedy, however, if the search for consistency and precision and reliability kept the census takers and the consumers of census data from recognizing that a massive substantive shift in ethnicity was occurring before their very eyes. It would be a shame if we were to explain the difficulties of the ethnic/racial enumeration as simply due to technical enumeration problems.

In ethnic and race relations, we are often dealing with processes that are in flux. In a certain sense, it means ambiguity about exactly what the people are. Consequently, there will be certain "anomalous" results that would be unacceptable for census questions about, say, age, province of birth or number of children ever born. It is the nature of ethnic relations that we are dealing with a process that changes gradually or sometimes rapidly over time. A census is a snapshot at a given point; had you taken a snapshot at one time and then again two hundred years later, then the changes would look sharp and clear. It is inevitable that a few snapshots taken every five or ten years (Canada and the United States, respectively) through a short span will generate all kinds of interpretive problems since it will be difficult to separate the forest from the trees



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and the short-term fluctuations may hide the long term shifts. All that we can do is try as hard as possible to avoid technical enumeration problems (for example, the U.S. ancestry question and its instructions confuse historical origins with respondent's personal identification). If technical clarity occurs, then even Shakespeare would conclude that the problem lies not in ourselves but in our sociological stars, i.e. the problems reflect substantive changes in the nature of ethnic relations.

### *Each group has distinctive needs from the census*

Another Devilish Principle is: a given census question will vary between ethnic/racial groups in its appropriateness and importance. For example, the generational factor is extremely important for the first few segments of White groups in the United States – indeed for the first generations of any immigrant population, for example, Asians or groups from Africa and Caribbean. This will not be a priority variable for other groups, for example, the vast majority of the American Black population or Indians in Canada or the United States. It will be of declining importance for various White ethnic populations who consist of increasing numbers who have been in the country for many generations. In Canada, for example, generation is unlikely to help us much in studying French Canadians.

This, in turn, leads to a Devilish Subprinciple. Namely, the groups will differ in the racial and ethnic questions that are most desirable from their point of view. In its simplest form, it means that groups usually favor enumerations which lead to the largest count of their members. (American Indians are an important exception in the United States, often objecting to the inclusion of respondents who do not choose Indian on the "race" question but did indicate Indian ancestry on the separate ethnic ancestry question.) Larger numbers are usually perceived as making the group more important in the society and, as a consequence, having greater leverage in the political system. This Principle means that census enumerations about race and ethnic matters involve a set of tradeoffs: each subgroup has its own list of most desired questions. The census organization of each nation not only has its own set of preferences but it is also a political entity and hence must adjudicate between the diverging preferences expressed by the groups themselves. I believe there is a shift away from ethnic questions in the census reflecting the concerns of the politically dominant ethnic group (as described by Petersen 1969 and Kirk 1946). The groups themselves have increasing influence over the nature of the questions asked and the classification and reporting of the responses.

At the risk of overstating this Devilish Principle, I would claim that each ethnic group has the potential ability to control its own enumeration – in the sense of a veto on how it is defined, classified and described. However, each group has no veto power over other groups. (Choldin 1986, has done a superb job of reviewing the political events leading to the introduction of a Hispanic question in the United States census.) I discovered this principle the hard way while attending a conference on the census a few years ago when the Bureau of the Census was

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preparing for the 1990 Census. I naively suggested there was no reason to have an Hispanic question separate from the ethnic ancestry question since the former – as far as I could tell – could be classified as a subpart of the latter. Several participants from prominent Hispanic organizations were furious with such a proposal. They were furious, by the way, not at me (just a naive academic), rather it was in the form of a warning to census personnel of dire consequences that would follow were this proposal taken seriously.

I would say that all interest groups are morally righteous, at least in presenting their case to the outside world. A collectivity with a particular interest is usually able to claim that anything short of total support is at least a violation of precepts that are universal to the religions of the Western world, to say nothing of running counter to the national interests. Of course, this goes far beyond racial and ethnic groups – I have no doubt that if manufacturers or retailers were to want the census to count the number of refrigerators in each home, they would also find morally righteous reasons for asking that question. But when we come to ethnic/racial groups we have a complex problem which goes beyond the usual pressures exerted by interest groups. To wit, there are deep symbolic elements intertwined in the recognition and description of the groups and these are often coupled with very strong feelings and attachments to one's group. The consequences are considerable; keep in mind that the census is, after all, an official government document. It is, therefore, appropriate to view the enumeration of one's group in a very serious way, not only because of the political, economic, and social consequences – important as these are themselves – but also because of the symbolic representation entailed when the facts about the group are reported as an official governmental report.

### *A group is not the same as the people in the group*

Another feature is the failure of people to follow orderly processes in dealing with their ethnicity. In terms of the notion of boundaries developed in Barth (1969), we often find people crashing through these boundaries. This may reflect assimilation, passing from lower to higher status groups, social pressures, the influence of mixed marriages on mates or their offspring, lack of knowledge, migration to new areas or increasing generational distance from the immigrant groups (see Lieberman 1985; Lieberman and Waters 1986, 1988; Waters 1990; Alba 1990). We must recognize these processes but it is equally important to understand the following Principle: the groups may persist despite a flow of people across their boundaries. We have to consider two separate questions. First, suppose there is an ethnic group, say Poles, and there are people of Polish ancestry who either cross the boundary into some other category or simply belong to no specific category (what I have called the Unhyphenated Whites), then this is a social fact of great importance. Indeed, one of the challenges to census enumeration comes after we recognize that such a pattern does not necessarily reflect a malfunction in the enumeration procedure. The challenge then becomes one of dealing with the rates of crossing and enumerating the socio-economic characteristics of the crossers.



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There is a second issue, however, and that is the boundaries can be permeable but the group does not go away. The existence of crossers does not mean that the group per se is disappearing or is any less real. A substantial outmovement from the Polish category, for example, can even be accompanied by a growth in the number of Poles (depending on birth and death rates, the characteristics of who leaves and immigration or crossing into the group from elsewhere). The first phenomenon does not inherently answer questions about the second phenomenon. Only through recognition of the process can we expect the census to help us address the issues with meaningful and relevant data.

### *How many questions?*

In thinking about the difficulties in enumerating racial and ethnic groups in the census, we need to keep in mind that one of the problems entails a form of "blaming the victim". In modern societies we recognize that income is a complex matter and not likely to be suitably enumerated with just one or two questions. As a consequence, there are numerous questions asked about income, at least in the United States census. Here is a complicated and extremely difficult topic and one accepts that many questions are necessary to pool together the array of information necessary for a reasonable description. The relevance of this for ethnicity in the census stems from the restriction in the number of questions that we ask. This is a separate matter from the difficulties inherent in the subject. We are more willing to ask an elaborate set of questions to ascertain income than to determine ethnicity and race. Since there is a zero sum game, such that expansion of some topics in the census would mean a decline in others, I am not naive enough to think there will be — or even should be — an unlimited expansion in racial/ethnic questions. But it is important to recognize that some of the difficulties we encounter in this conference are not intrinsically insurmountable; rather they reflect handicaps due to a restriction in the number of questions directed at the topic.

There has to be a willingness to use the existing "space" available for ethnic and racial questions to get at new kinds of questions. I consider the open-ended ethnic ancestry question employed in the 1980 and 1990 U.S. Census as an absolutely magnificent and daring effort, really running counter to conventional census procedures. Later in the conference we can deal with issues such as: whether the question is the best possible one; whether the instructions and examples are as good as they can be; and the difficulty of dealing with multiple responses. But I truly appreciate this bold effort and I recognize how unconventional and expensive the coding problems are when a sizable sample of the population is given the opportunity to fill out a blank line, rather than chose from a variety of fixed options.

One possible approach to the minimum space problem is to rethink the long form administered to 17 percent of the population. (In order to have a simple explication, let us assume that it is a 15 percent sample rather than 17.) Rather than administer the same questions to the entire 15 percent of the population, suppose somewhat different questionnaires are used such that the 15



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percent is divided into three equal subgroups of five percent. We could include ethnic/racial questions A and B in one subsample and ask A and C in the second subsample and B and D in the third. This would allow us to gain more ethnic/racial information and also permit certain cross-tabulations that could not occur when there is no overlap between subsamples. I call these two combined features a system of "layered-overlapping" samples. It would not solve all of our problems but it would permit more information about race and ethnicity than occurs from a single sample based on one long form. There is a price to pay: less detail for small areas; even smaller sample sizes for small groups; a somewhat more complicated recording steps for the sample data; and the need to pay attention to interactions between questions on the responses generated. For example, except for sampling errors, the distribution of responses to ethnic question A should be the same in both subsamples. But these subsamples would allow us to have a generational question without giving up on any other ethnic question, albeit the *Ns* would not be of the same magnitude as can be obtained from a full sample question.

### *Subjectivity vs. Objectivity*

Another special issue is that ethnic and racial questions in the census almost invariably involve subjective and attitudinal issues. In societies which have no formal processes for assigning an ethnic origin – as contrasted with South Africa's pass laws, the practices in Nazi Germany, the internal passports used in the former USSR or the legal definition of Negro once established by Southern states in the United States – ethnicity and race also entail issues of self-definition. In most democratic societies, the forced classification of persons by a government body is generally viewed as repulsive. I totally support this aversion – it is from my values highly desirable – but one necessary price is a clash with a general disposition of censuses to avoid asking attitudinal questions or other "subjective" questions. Census organizations are resistant to them since it is not part of traditional orientation of census takers. The census asks what year were you born in, how much money did you earn, what is your occupation and where do you live. The census usually does not ask whether you think you are old or not, whether you would call yourself poor or rich, what occupation you would like to have or where you prefer to live. Should there be questions about ethnicity on a census? If so, depending on the time and place, the influence of attitudinal matters may seep into the responses. Like it or not, such an effect is unavoidable. What we need to consider are ways of minimizing the magnitude of such distortions and, when appropriate, ways of directly searching for types of questions that openly reflect significant attitudinal influences.

### *In conclusion: One last devilish principle*

By way of summary, we have to live with ambiguity in our census data on ethnic and racial groups. We have to accept it when the nature of relations is inherently ambiguous. And we have to respond to it. In reacting to rapidly changing conditions, in each census we have to be ready to change our response categories, if not our questions, from those used in earlier decades.

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There is no choice but to accept these conditions if we are to deal with the awesome ethnic diversity of both Canada and the United States, which is one of the most striking characteristics of each nation.

My final Devilish Principle consists simply of repeating a quote from the distinguished philosopher of science, Abraham Kaplan, that Petersen found useful to cite at the end of his significant paper on the classification of ethnic groups in the census:

The demand for exactness of meaning and for precise definition of terms can easily have a pernicious effect, as I believe it often has had in behavioral science. It is the dogmaticisms outside science that proliferate closed systems of meaning; the scientist is in no hurry for closure. Tolerance of ambiguity is as important for creativity in science as it is anywhere else.

And I would simply add, so too for the enumeration of racial and ethnic groups in our censuses.

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### ***3. National Experiences in the Measurement of Ethnicity***

#### **3.1 Introduction**

After the keynote address by Mr. Stanley Lieberson of Harvard University, the conference proceeded to a review of the experiences of six national census bureaus in the collection of data on ethnicity. Representatives of the agencies had been asked to submit formal papers which were available at the conference. For the session, however, they were asked to give a short presentation on their papers. The presentations from the United States Bureau of the Census (represented by Nampeo McKenney and Arthur Cresce) and Statistics Canada (Pamela White and Viviane Renaud) were followed by remarks from the two discussants, Reynolds Farley and T. John Samuel.

Four speakers presented a world-wide perspective on the collection of ethnic information. They represented different national data-collection agencies whose experiences could provide a global view on various approaches to the collection of ethnicity data and the problems each entails: United Kingdom, David Pearce and Philip White; Australia, John Cornish; Malaysia, Teik Huat Khoo; and the Russian Republic, Galina Bondarskaya. The presentations were followed by a lively open discussion from the floor, chaired by William Butz of the U.S. Bureau of the Census. During the discussion conference participants raised a number of issues and concerns that had emerged from the national presentations. Mr. Butz concluded by summarizing the themes and problems that were evident in the presentations; he also indicated a number of questions and topics that should be tested for future censuses.

This section of the conference publication includes summaries of the presentations given by the representatives of the invited statistical agencies, as well as the discussants' remarks and resums of the floor discussion. The full papers prepared by the invited speakers are included in Part 2 of this publication.

#### **3.2 Summary of National Presentations**

##### **Nampeo R. McKenney and Arthur R. Cresce (U.S.A.)**

This presentation focuses on the experiences of the United States Bureau of Census in measuring ethnicity in its decennial censuses. Our paper covers five major areas: the 1990 Census questions on ethnicity; factors that affected the development of the questions; evaluation of ethnic data; how the census questions relate to concepts of ethnicity; and issues that must be addressed as the Census Bureau attempts to meet future demands for ethnic data.



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The paper focuses on the three ethnic items – race, Hispanic origin, and ancestry – in the 1990 Census – that most governmental and private data users currently use as the primary identifiers of ethnicity.

The Bureau of the Census has traditionally treated race and ethnicity as two separate concepts. This approach provides the most complete set of data to meet a wide diversity of data needs. The Bureau does recognize, however, that the concepts are not mutually exclusive and do overlap.

### *1990 Census Ethnic Questions*

The race concept, as used by the Census Bureau, reflects self-identification. Persons were asked to report the one race with which they most closely identify.

The race question (see Figure 2, p. 203) was asked of all persons. This question, as in previous censuses, included a number of socio-cultural or national origin groups. Three categories "Indian Amer.", "Other API" (Asian or Pacific Islander) and "Other race" required written responses. The race item is used to divide the population into five basic categories – White, Black, American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian and Pacific Islander and Other race. (It also provides information on individual Asian and Pacific Islander groups and American Indian tribes.)

The two primary ethnic identifiers as used by the Census Bureau are the Hispanic origin and ancestry questions. The Hispanic origin item is asked of all persons, while the ancestry question is asked of a sample of the population.

The Hispanic origin question, like the race item, is based on self-identification. The Hispanic origin question (see Figure 3, p. 204) asks respondents to select one category. Respondents who report in the "Other Hispanic" category are asked to write in their specific origin. The Hispanic item provides data on about 20 specific Hispanic groups.

The ancestry question (see Figure 4, p. 205) is open-ended, requiring persons to write in their response. The ancestry item allows multiple reports, unlike the race and Hispanic origin items which ask respondents to select only one category.

The ancestry item has several aids to help respondents answer the question because previous studies showed that some persons had difficulty in understanding the intent of the question. For instance, the item includes 22 examples of responses to help respondents answer with an ethnic group.

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This comprehensive identifier provides information on an extensive array of groups such as English, Polish, Byelorussian, Lebanese, Jamaican and Nigerian.

### *Factors Affecting Questionnaire Content*

The major factors that influenced the development of the census questions on race, Hispanic origin and ancestry are an assessment of data needs, content testing, socio-political factors, technology and so forth.

The 1990 Census included three separate and somewhat overlapping questions – race, Hispanic origin and ancestry – to meet both governmental and private needs that have increased significantly during the last two decades. A great portion of the increased demand for race and Hispanic origin data has been tied to federal legislation, a federal statistical directive and program regulations that specify the use of census data on race and Hispanic origin. Ancestry information is not explicitly required by any Federal legislation or directive; however, the data are used by state and local governments for identifying and assessing social and economic conditions of various groups.

William Petersen indicates that political and fiscal influences are among the most important factors affecting the enumeration of any ethnic group. Certainly, all three ethnic questions have evolved in part as a result of socio-political issues. In particular, flows of immigration, public policy, perceived recognition and changing identity have impacted upon the content and wording of the question.

The development of the ethnic questions involved balancing the competent use of social science research methodology with legislative, program and societal and sociopolitical issues.

### *Evaluation of 1990 Census Data on Ethnicity*

Our paper presents early 1990 Census findings on the racial and ethnic composition of the population and some preliminary evaluations of the ethnic data. The evaluations available at this stage are based on very rough measures; however, they raise issues that need to be addressed.

The 1990 Census data on race and Hispanic origin showed that the diversity of the United States population is increasing. Data from the race item showed that the American Indian, Eskimo, and Aleut, Asian and Pacific Islander and Black populations grew faster than the total or White populations during the 1980-90 decade. The Asian and Pacific Islander population grew the fastest, primarily as a result of substantial immigration to the United States. The American Indian, Eskimo and Aleut population, the numerically smallest group, had the second highest rate of growth. This increase far exceeded what could be attributed solely to natural increase.

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Our early evaluations indicate that most respondents are able to answer the race question; overall, the question worked reasonably well at the national level. However, some persons didn't understand the question and some persons provided incomplete or inconsistent responses.

During the data collection phase of the 1990 Census, we received a substantial number of inquiries from respondents about the race question. The majority of inquiries were from persons confused about how to answer because of the long listing of national origin groups; persons of Hispanic origin who didn't see their group listed or didn't identify with any of the listed groups; and persons of mixed parentage who wanted to report more than one race.

Another indication of data quality is the allocation rates for nonresponse. Allocation means assigning an entry when a question is completely blank or has incomplete information. While the allocation rate for nonresponse in race has traditionally been low, the 1990 rate is somewhat higher than the 1980 rate (2.7 percent versus 1.5 percent, respectively). Changes in procedures for following up on blanks during 100 percent processing may have contributed to the higher 1990 allocation rate. Nevertheless, the 1990 rate is of concern in light of the telephone inquiries and response problems discussed below.

Another data quality issue concerned the write-in entries to the race question. (Three categories, Indian Amer., Other API, and Other race required write-ins.) Substantial numbers of persons provided a write-in but did not mark a racial category or provided a write-in entry that was inconsistent with the racial category marked. The Bureau's processing operation for the 100 percent race data included an automated coding and editing procedure which proved essential in providing quality data on race. This innovation for the 1990 Census allowed subject matter specialists to review the write-ins and code and classify the race write-in response in the appropriate racial category.

Our early evaluations provide information on the extent of the inconsistent write-ins. Of those persons marking the Amer. Indian circle, about nine percent provided a write-in that was not an American Indian entry. Examples of such inconsistent write-ins were Italian, Polish, African-Amer., Haitian or an Asian or Pacific Islander group. While the nine percent may seem like a small percentage, it can have a significant impact on the accuracy of the data for American Indians, a relatively small population group of about 2 million. For the Other API category and Other race, about 54 percent and 43 percent respectively of the write-ins were not consistent with the marked circle.

The reporting in the American Indian category is a persistent issue. The higher than expected growth rate of American Indians for the 1980 to 1990 decade, as well as the previous 1970 to 1980 decade, raises issues about what the race question is measuring for this population. Both Snipp and Passel, who conducted studies of the 1980 and previous Census data on American Indians, conclude that changing racial identity of persons with some American Indian ancestry



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probably contributed to the growth. Larger than expected increases in the American Indian population are partly the result of improved outreach but they are also due to possible misreporting. For instance, a preliminary examination of 1990 Census questionnaires for households (after coding and editing) for several states showed cases where parents had reported themselves as Asian Indians but their children were reported as American Indian. Another issue is higher than expected numbers of persons reporting Cherokee tribe in both the 1990 and 1980 Censuses.

The quality of the data for the American Indian population is of concern since it is relatively small in size and the data are used to disperse funds to American Indian tribal and Alaska Native Village governments under a number of government programs.

Results from the 1990 Census showed that the Hispanic population of some 22.4 million grew by 53 percent during the last decade; immigration accounted for about half of the growth. Overall, the quality of data for Hispanic origin is good. Nevertheless, our evaluation of 1990 data showed continuation of problems noted in previous censuses such as high nonresponse and misreporting.

The 100 percent allocation rate for nonresponse for Hispanic origin was high at 10 percent, substantially above the 1980 level. The reduced field follow-up in 1990 may have contributed to this higher rate. The follow-up procedures for 1990 and 1980 for the sample (long) forms were comparable. Even with the sample data, the 1990 allocation rate was higher.

Our analysis of previous census information revealed that some non-Hispanics did not answer the Hispanic question either because they did not think the question pertained to them or as a protest to a question targeted to one ethnic group. A review of the 1990 Census experience suggests that part of the nonresponse to the Hispanic question is Hispanics who wrote in Hispanic, Mexican, Puerto Rican to the race item and then left the Hispanic item blank.

Another data issue is the reporting in the Mexican Amer. category and Other Hispanic categories. Previous census studies found non-Hispanics reporting in the Mexican Amer. category to indicate that they were Americans. There is still some evidence of this misreporting in 1990 but the problem appears to be diminished from the 1980 levels.

About 90 percent of the population in 1990 reported an ancestry, similar to results of the 1980 Census. The ancestry item had a relatively high nonresponse in 1990 but somewhat reduced from the 1980 level (10.2 and 9.6 percents, respectively).

Consistency between 1980 and 1990 in reporting in the general types of ancestry is evidence that the question worked reasonably well in 1990. However, consistency between 1980 and 1990

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in reporting levels for specific ancestry groups deserves some attention. The lack of consistency was one of Farley's major criticisms of the 1980 ancestry question.

The 1990 Census findings, compared to 1980, show both significant consistencies and inconsistencies in levels of ancestry groups. For some groups, such as Polish, Italian, Danish and Lebanese, there is strong consistency. On the other hand, there clearly was inconsistent reporting for others, such as higher than expected increases over the decade for German, French-Canadian and Cajun while unexpected declines for English.

What explanations can we provide for these inconsistencies between censuses? Are the changing levels the result of flux, described in the Lieberman and Waters' monograph on ethnicity? That may be part of the explanation. Another possible factor is that for persons who may not be sure of their ancestry or ethnic origin, the examples provided may serve as response categories. German is used as the first example in the listing for the 1990 question but was the fourth example in 1980. The decline in reporting of English seems to be tied to changes in question design such as the dropping of English as an example for the 1990 ancestry item.

Changes in reporting levels lend further credence to the "example" effect. For instance, from 1980 to 1990 the number of Cajuns and French-Canadians (added as examples for 1990) grew substantially (from 30,000 to 600,000 and from 780 thousand to 2.2 million, respectively). On the other hand, French, which was dropped as an example in 1990, declined from 13 million to 10 million.

In summarizing, the early evaluations raise a number of issues related to measurement and overlapping questions. For instance, the reporting of American Indian in the race question is problematic and raises issues about what the race question is measuring. Some respondents, such as Hispanics, have difficulty answering the race question. For the Hispanic item, the issues involve persistent high allocation rates and who should report as Hispanic. For ancestry, consistency of reporting is a key issue for future research.

### *How Census Ethnic Questions Relate to Concepts of Ethnicity*

A review of ethnic-related information collected over 200 years of census-taking reveals a wide diversity of identifiers of ethnicity. Most have been objective in nature, for example, birthplace, or parental birthplace, mother tongue or non-English language spoken. Other questions such as race, Hispanic origin and ancestry are subjective.

Most of the questions asked in previous censuses met a very limited specific data need. For example, the question on birthplace provided information about the characteristics of persons who were part of the massive influx of immigration that occurred throughout the 19th and early 20th century. The needs for ethnic data are now more diverse, covering activities such as the



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drawing of political boundaries, dispersement of funds, enforcement of antidiscriminatory laws and implementation of affirmative action programs.

Over time, the census included questions that measured various aspects or parts of ethnicity. Attempts to provide a more comprehensive question are a more recent phenomenon. Specifically, the 1980 Census was the first one to employ a comprehensive open-ended question on ancestry or ethnic origin. This question replaced the parental birthplace question. Ancestry was chosen to provide data based on self identification; obtain data on ethnic groups regardless of generation; and to obtain data on groups not specifically identified on the race or Hispanic origin questions.

As Stanley Lieberson mentioned in his keynote address, the state of conceptual research on ethnicity reveals a great deal of diversity. A reading of the sociological and anthropological literature indicates a lack of consensus about a definition of ethnicity. Isajiw found 27 definitions of ethnicity in his review of 65 sociological and anthropological studies on the topic. Isajiw and others also have identified various attributes or dimensions of ethnicity. What identification of these dimensions is necessary for the development of a definition? A commonly agreed-upon definition has not yet emerged. Furthermore, even if an agreement on a definition were to occur, there is no guarantee that an operational definition could be implemented in a decennial census.

One important aspect of the debate about what comprises ethnicity is whether this concept can be objectively or subjectively defined. The objective approach assumes the existence of some obtainable set of information that would define a person's ethnic affiliation. Again, however, there is no consensus about what sort of information, if any, would define this affiliation or identity. The Census Bureau, as well as Statistics Canada, has taken the subjective approach, relying on the respondent's self identification and thus shifting the burden of identification to the respondent. There are important criticisms of the subjective approach which we touch on in discussing the ancestry question.

How does the race question, as used by the Census Bureau, relate to concepts of ethnicity? The race question is one of the most controversial items on the questionnaire. One key issue is whether race is a relevant concept in today's society or whether it is an outdated concept that merely perpetuates racism. In our paper, we cite the views of a variety of researchers who argue on either side of this issue. Another set of issues focuses on whether race is a concept different from ethnicity or whether race is really a dimension of ethnicity. Again, researchers disagree over these issues.

The Census Bureau chose to use separate questions on race, Hispanic origin and ancestry to meet data needs and provide the most complete count of each race and ethnic group. Furthermore, the use of multiple questions allows persons such as Black Puerto Ricans to choose both parts



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of their identity, as Black in the race question and as Puerto Rican in the Hispanic origin question. The use of multiple questions, however, also causes problems for some respondents. In particular, there is evidence that Hispanic respondents have problems reporting in the race question. We've noted that the allocation rates for race are higher in 1990 than in 1980 and the higher rates occurred in more heavily Hispanic areas. Furthermore, ethnographic studies have shown that some Hispanics identify themselves racially as Hispanic. In the 1990 Census, 43 percent of Hispanics identified as "other race" in the race question, with a large proportion of these persons providing a specific Hispanic write-in response. In some cases these persons did not answer the Hispanic question, presumably because they thought the Hispanic question was superfluous. Thus, while use of separate race and Hispanic questions provides greater flexibility in meeting data needs, it results in response problems for both questions.

A question on Hispanic origin has been included since the 1970 Census. Use of the Hispanic question raises two key issues: whether we should attempt to identify the groups comprising the Hispanic population as a single group; and what single term, if any, can we use to identify this group.

Gimenez argues strongly against such a blanket term on the grounds that the diversity of the groups comprising the Hispanic population, such as Mexican-American, Puerto Ricans, Cuban, Dominican and so on, undermines the meaning and intent of the term. She also notes that use of this type of approach perpetuates stereotypes. On the other hand, Hayes-Bautista and Chapa argue that in response to legislative mandates for collecting data on all Hispanics there is a need to use a single term.

Our own studies show that there is no consensus concerning a preferred term among Hispanic groups. We have used the combined term Spanish/Hispanic but even this term has not received universal recognition among Hispanic population. Furthermore, there is evidence that terms such as Hispanic and Latino attract the response of some Brazilian, Portuguese, French and Italian respondents who think the terms apply to them.

Regarding ancestry, we already noted that it is a direct open-ended question. It uses a subjective approach based on self-identification by the respondent. By using this approach we have been able to tap into several dimensions of ethnicity and provide more information than could have been provided by country of birth, parental birthplace or the language questions alone. The subjective approach, however, is open to two key criticisms: the data may not be consistently reported by respondents because of significant interethnic marriage and the length of time removed from immigrant ancestors; and uncertainty about the meaning of responses given, that is, does the response of German imply identification with German culture?

Farley raised some important questions about the consistency of reporting of ancestry in the 1980 Census, especially for large European ethnic groups. Lieberman and Waters viewed the 1980

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question as an important innovation in the identification of ethnicity but it mixed two different dimensions of ethnicity, thus causing some ambiguity about the intent of the question. These and other scholars who have studied and commented on the 1980 ancestry question have been awaiting with bated breath the results from the 1990 Census to test various hypotheses about this type of question. The preliminary results on the 1990 Census provide some fascinating insights into the reporting of ethnicity. For example, the absolute number and percent of persons reporting just the term "American" declined from 1980 to 1990. This result, together with the lower percent not reporting an ancestry in 1990, runs counter to the prediction that fewer persons would be able to provide a specific response.

We've noted reasonable growth consistency in a number of ethnic group totals between 1980 and 1990, although we have also noted significant differences primarily due to question design changes. We are sure that as additional evaluations become available, we will find more results that will challenge our notions and hypotheses about reporting of ethnicity in the United States.

In summary, we use three separate questions – race, Hispanic origin and ancestry – to collect information on ethnicity. A diverse range of important data needs has led us to use three separate but somewhat overlapping questions. This approach, however, has created problems for some respondents who have great difficulty understanding the intent of the questions. This apparent confusion, along with the continuing pressure to reduce respondent burden by reducing the number of questions on the form, will put greater pressure on the Census Bureau to find ways to combine questions. However, it is not clear what path we should follow at this stage of our planning. This is one of the reasons for having this conference.

### *Issues to be Addressed in the Future*

In concluding this paper, we want to consider the key issues or factors the Census Bureau needs to consider as we begin our planning for the 2000 Census. First and foremost, we must invest heavily in consultations with key stakeholders and attempt to develop consensus about what types of ethnic questions should be on the census form. This is a simple recognition that while question development needs to have a solid basis in social science, this process is not social science conducted in a vacuum. Consensus may be difficult given the potential for change in question wording and subsequent impact on ethnic data but, on the other hand, the pressure for change may be so great that we can not keep the status quo.

We will make information from our evaluation of the ethnic questions available to stakeholders. We will also use a variety of research tools to investigate how well alternative question formats performed. The goal for Census 2000, as always, will be to develop questions that are clear, have high response levels and therefore obtain high quality data. Obviously, concerns about comparability are important source of pressure to resist change. There is a legitimate concern that significant change in the questions could diminish the ability to distinguish the amount of



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and reasons for intercensal change for an ethnic group. Data collection technology may also play an important role in making possible question formats that are difficult to implement in our current environment.

Even with a technological breakthrough the Bureau will still need to address fundamental issues concerning comparability, legislative requirements, quality of data and consensus among key data users before any changes in question, concepts and formats can be made. These do not exhaust the issues we will face as we prepare for the 2000 Census but they provide a hint of the formidable task the Bureau faces in developing the questions on ethnicity for the future.

### **Pamela M. White (Canada)**

I would like to provide a brief overview of Canada's extensive experience in the collection of ethnicity data. I intend to focus on question format and concept changes that have occurred to Canada's ethnic origin question since 1971 and to discuss the impetus for these changes. I also wish to elaborate on respondents' and users' views of ethnic ancestry and ethnic identity and I will touch on issues of ethnic group formation and typology. I do not plan to review technical details or to describe in any extensive way Statistics Canada ethnic origin publication approaches.

The collection of ethnic and racial origin in Canada's censuses has a long history. The first ethnic question was asked in 1767. Since Confederation, information on the ethnic or racial origins of the population has been collected in every national census, except 1891 when a question on the French Canadian population replaced the one on origins.

Between 1901 and 1941, Canada's census included a question on the "racial origins" of the population. After the Second World War, the concept of "racial" origin was replaced by "ethnic origin". Between 1901 and 1971, ethnic origin in the Canadian census was considered to have been a paternally inherited cultural characteristic. During the period 1951 to 1971, the concept was also linked with the heritage language of the paternal ancestor. Respondents were permitted to report one group.

For the first time in 1971 most Canadians were enumerated using a drop-off, mail-back questionnaire. In 1971 one in three Canadian households received the sample questionnaire which contained the ethnic origin question: "To which ethnic or cultural group did you or your ancestor (on the male side) belong on first coming to this continent?". As in the past, respondents were to report only one ethnic group.

In 1981 the concept of ethnic origin was significantly changed. Ethnicity was no longer defined as emanating from the paternal ancestor. The 1981 question asked: "To which ethnic or cultural



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group did you or your ancestors belong on first coming to this continent?". Respondents were permitted to mark or specify as many groups as were applicable. However, respondents were not specifically informed that multiple responses were permitted. Even so, 11 percent of Canadians in 1981 reported more than one ethnic group.

In 1981 the question provided mark-in entries for 15 groups. The groups were listed on the basis of incidence in the previous census. As a result, the non-European group "Chinese" was shown. Aboriginal respondents were provided with four mark-in entries: "Inuit", "Status or registered Indian", "Non-status Indian" and "Métis". The *1981 Census Guide* also asked aboriginal people to disregard the phrase "on first coming to this continent". As in previous censuses, the question contained a write-in space on which to enter groups not shown in the mark-in entries.

The association between language and ethnicity was also changed in 1981. The *Census Guide* cautioned respondents not to confuse language with ethnic or cultural roots. Respondents were asked to report specific ethnic groups, for example "Austrian" and not "German".

The 1971 multiculturalism policy, along with changes to Canada's immigration laws during the late 1960s and through the 1970s permitting the immigration of previously inadmissible groups, had a significant impact on the census ethnic question. For example, it became clear that the list of ethnic groups coded for previous censuses no longer fully reflected the country's ethnic diversity. Furthermore, it could not meet the demands for data coming from governments and ethnic organizations.

Also by 1981 the convention that ethnic ancestry was a trait inherited from the paternal ancestor could not longer be supported. Certainly the emerging emphasis on gender studies contributed to this change in approach. There was also a recognition that the Canadian cultural reality included mixed ethnic marriages as well as increasing ethnic diversity due to immigration. Thus, it had become imperative to collect data on both single and multiple ethnic responses even though this would introduce considerable complexity into the data base. Fortunately, technological advances occurring during the 1980s enabled Statistics Canada to collect, process and publish more complex ethnic information. Changes made in 1981 ended the historical comparability of ethnic origin data. This continues to be problematic for some users.

The ethnic origin question was changed again for the 1986 Census. The temporal reference point, "on first coming to this continent", was eliminated at the request of aboriginal groups which do not view themselves as being of immigrant stock. The 1986 Census question asked: "To which ethnic or cultural group(s) do you or did your ancestors belong?". The question also included the instruction informing respondents to "Mark or specify as many [groups] as applicable". In 1986, 28 percent reported more than one ethnic group. Fifteen mark-in entries

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were shown and three write-in spaces were provided for respondents to indicate groups not on the mark-in list. Examples of other ethnic groups were shown just above these write-in spaces.

The 15 mark-in entries were arranged in order of incidence of reporting in the 1981 Census. Two non-European groups were shown: "Chinese" and "Black". As well, a number of non-European groups were included in the list of example ethnic groups shown next to the three write-in spaces.

The terms used to describe the aboriginal populations were also changed. "North American Indian" replaced the terms "Status Indian" and "non-Status Indian". This removed an element of confusion, as in 1981 the Indian Act categories had been considered to be within the realm of ethnicity.

As in 1981 the concepts of ethnic origin and language were deliberately separated as respondents were asked to consider their ethnic and cultural roots, not their heritage language. For example, the *1986 Census Guide* asked respondents to report "Austrian" rather than "German" and "Haitian" instead of "French".

As had been the case since 1971, the 1986 Census was, for the most part, self-enumerated. The ethnic origin question was asked on the sample questionnaire which one in five Canadian households received. Residents of Indian reserves and people in remote and northern areas were enumerated by canvassers. In these cases, all respondents completed the long questionnaire.

Employment equity legislation passed in 1986 has also had an important impact on the census ethnic question and ethnic group classification. As noted, the mark-in entry "Black" was added to the list of ethnic groups shown on the question to improve reporting by Canada's African origin populations. It had been observed by Boxhill in 1981 that respondents born in Haiti were reporting French rather than Haitian. This addition proved to be a point of contention for some respondents in 1991.

Changes to the 1986 ethnic origin question, particularly removal of the phrase "on first coming to this continent", may have caused some confusion among respondents about the purpose and intent of the question. Some respondents may have interpreted the question as asking about ethnic identity rather than ethnic ancestry. In an attempt to overcome this problem, the 1991 Census content determination program included extensive testing of ethnic ancestry and ethnic identity questions. In addition, a race question was included in the testing program.

After considerable testing and consultation with users it was decided to repeat the 1986 question in 1991. The 1991 Census question includes a note which explains its purpose and informs respondents that the question asks about ancestral ethnic origins rather than ethnic identity or citizenship.



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The 1991 ethnic origin question meets the ethnic ancestry data requirements of multicultural programs. As has been the case for 1981 and 1986, the 1991 data on Canada's visible minority populations will be derived from detailed cross-tabulations of ethnic origin with other census variables including birthplace, mother tongue and, in 1981 and 1991, religion.

Minor changes were made to the list of groups shown on the 1991 question. For instance, the mark-in entries were reordered on the basis of incidence reporting in 1986. The group "Inuit" was qualified with the word "Eskimo" to overcome a reporting problem that had been noted in 1986. Because of low response in the third write-in space in 1986, only two spaces were provided in 1991. The list of example groups shown beside the write-in spaces was expanded.

As in 1986, the *1991 Census Guide* pointed out the difference between language and ethnic origin and asked respondents to report, for example, "Haitian" and not "French".

In 1991, the ethnic origin question was on the sample questionnaire which was delivered to one in five households. Self-enumeration was used to collect information from about 99 percent of Canadian households while canvassers enumerated populations living on Indian reserves or in remote and northern areas. For the first time a special canvasser questionnaire was developed for the 1991 Census. This form contained the sample questionnaire content but questions were written so as to facilitate canvasser-type data collection.

Before I proceed to discuss other aspects of Canada's ethnic question and concept, it should also be noted that several other cultural and social questions are included in Canada's census. For instance, information on Indian status was first obtained from the 1981 ethnic question and separate questions on this topic have been asked in both the 1986 and 1991 Censuses. Canada's census includes a question on birthplace of the respondent while birthplace of parents has not been asked since 1971. Citizenship and year of immigration are also asked. A question on religion has traditionally been on the decennial censuses. As well, several questions on language are asked including mother tongue, home language, official language and in 1991 non-official language knowledge.

I would now like to consider what has been measured by Canada's ethnic question. Without a doubt, it has at various times measured differing facets and dimensions of ethnicity. For instance, before 1981 only paternal origins were collected. As well, during this period there was an explicit connection between language and ethnicity as mother tongue data were used in conjunction with the ethnic origin question to ascertain levels of language and ethnic transfer. Ethnic identity, especially "Canadian" and "American", has never been considered as being within the realm of ethnic ancestry in Canada. Respondents were not encouraged to report these groups as ancestries and before 1951 such response would not have been accepted as valid.



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Lieberson and Waters have concluded that Canada's census questions have measured the ethnic ancestry of the population to the degree that respondents know their background and are willing to report it. Notwithstanding the 1986 Census question, the focus has been on ethnic ancestry and not ethnic identity.

In any discussion of the measurement of ethnic origin, it is important to remember that the vehicle used to record ethnic group affiliation can influence the choices that respondents make regarding their ethnic backgrounds and current ethnic identification. The social and political environment at the time of enumeration can also affect the reporting of ethnicity, for instance the desire to report "Canadian" which occurred during the collection of the 1991 Census. These ethnic choices can have a considerable effect on census counts.

We know that our attempts to measure ethnic ancestry are affected by factors such as lack of knowledge of family ethnic background, inter-generational ethnic transfer and length of time since the immigration event. Respondents may also equate ethnic ancestry with the concepts of nationality, citizenship and ethnic identity.

It is important in my view for statistical agencies to remember that ethnicity is both a status and a process. For Canada, influenced as it is by multiculturalism policy, Barth's conceptualization of ethnic dynamics is particularly salient, especially as it pertains to classification and group formation. Barth's emphasis on ethnicity as a subjective process, in which ethnic labels are used for self-definition and during interaction with others, is of considerable relevance.

Groups emerge and coalesce, such as the ethnic category of the Magr  bin in Quebec. Others groups become less popular, for example the reporting of German in the 1941 Census. When the 1991 Census data are released in 1993, it will be interesting to compare counts for the group Yugoslavian with those reported in 1986. Equally, there are ethnic organizations which suggest to their members to report, for instance, Greek and not Macedonian.

There is also the view that Statistics Canada can influence respondent's choices by listing some but not all groups on the questionnaire. Some ethnic associations hold the view that the listing of groups on the questionnaire results in higher response rates for the groups shown. As larger counts translate into a heightened public profile, there is an incentive to do all that is possible to increase counts including securing a place on the census questionnaire list. Even the position on the list is cause for concern in some quarters.

But whether the listing of groups or their ordering in the list results in higher counts has yet to be proven conclusively.

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Another point of contention is the selection of groups listed. Since 1981, Statistics Canada has used incidence reporting on the previous census. As a result, newly arrived groups do not obtain a mark-in entry.

In essence, all of these points of disagreement with Statistics Canada have to do with the notion of ethnic choices, especially when it is perceived that the question might structure or influence respondents' answers. As was evident in the 1991 Census consultations and at focus group sessions, many ethnic groups and respondents are concerned that they receive fair treatment. Thus Statistics Canada must not only treat all groups equally but it must be seen to be dealing with all groups in the same manner. The design of questions which do not contain a perceived ethnic or linguistic bias is a major challenge.

In Canada, the interaction of several forces has affected the collection of ethnic data along with respondents attitudes towards it. It is apparent that factors such as Canada's multiculturalism policy, employment equity legislation and significant changes to the nation's immigration law contributed to increased ethnic diversity and a greater awareness on the part of many Canadians of their ethnic background(s). When the time came for respondents to complete a census questionnaire, they wanted the opportunity to report their ethnic and cultural diversity. They also wanted Statistics Canada publications to reflect the country's cultural mosaic.

A major mandate of Statistics Canada, of course, is to make data accessible to users. The census ethnic origin data pose a special challenge in this regard. In 1986, the data base contained information on over 100 different ethnic groups. Moreover, single and multiple response counts for each group were shown.

By way of clarification, a single response is one marked entry or one write-in response. The reporting of more than one group by selecting more than one mark-in entry, providing more than one write-in response or the combination of the two is considered to be a multiple ethnic response. In 1986, for example, a respondent could report a maximum of 18 different groups. Statistics Canada does not attempt to prioritize multiple responses. In fact, it would be impossible to do so as there is no way of knowing which groups the respondent marked or write-in first.

Briefly, there are several ways of displaying data and depending on the uses to which the data are put, each approach has merit. These approaches are discussed in the conference paper.

It should be noted that users frequently find the differing modes of data display confusing. Education of the user community is required to facilitate appropriate data dissemination. Maintaining a flexible data retrieval system will also ensure that users can obtain data in the forms which best suit their needs.

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Several challenges face the agency with regard to the continued measurement, collection and dissemination of ethnicity data. Ethnic group formation is dynamic. Each census and survey produces but a snap-shot of this changing ethnic landscape.

In each country, ethnicity is socially constructed in a different way. Recently in Canada issues of ethnic identity and ancestral origin have taken on new meaning. Certainly, responses conditioned by the awareness of these two question areas result in differing population counts and distributions. Moreover, Statistics Canada has a mandate to provide data for multiculturalism and employment equity programs. Without a direct measure of race or colour, an ethnic ancestry-based question has proved to be essential. Yet, depending on the numerical strength of evolving group "Canadian", the continued success of this approach may be brought into question.

For future censuses there will be some difficult choices to make regarding the continued collection of ethnic ancestry data. To deal fairly with all users, many of whom have differing needs for and opinions about the collection of ancestry, identity and race type data, it is imperative that the unbiased position of Statistics Canada remains intact.

In the area of dissemination of census ethnic data, there is the continuing challenge of meeting diverse users' needs. This involves not only publication of tabulations but also interpreting data trends and comparing regional differences. Ensuring data accessibility to community and ethnic groups, given Statistics Canada's cost-recovery policy, requires creative initiatives on the part of various users, including the academic and ethnic communities and policy research sectors.

Finally, during the 1991 Census, public debate on such topics as multiculturalism and Canadian nationalism elevated the profile of the collection of cultural data among certain sectors of the population. While these are specific concerns for Canada, the critical point is that the census is not necessarily a neutral data collection vehicle. Relevant and clearly worded questions facilitate accurate response and promote participation. But events occurring during data collection can affect respondents and influence both their participation and responses. In this area, Statistics Canada's impartiality and commitment to respondent confidentiality must continue to be safeguarded as these are some of the agency's most important assets in the drive to gain respondent confidence and participation.

**Philip H. White and David L. Pearce (United Kingdom)**

I will be setting the historical context to the development of an ethnic group question in Britain; then Philip will describe this process and, if there is time, I will say a few words about how the question went in our 1991 Census.



I start from the position of having a long-term interest in measuring the size and characteristics of different ethnic groups. My first job in the public sector was as a statistician in charge of migration and ethnic group statistics and I had the task of estimating the size of the "coloured" population and projecting it forward from a 1969 base to 1981 and 1986. The population was estimated from birthplace data from the 1966 Sample Census. Fertility rates were based on child-woman ratios and future migration on a model linking the inflow of household heads and dependants. Notice the terminology used at that time. The term "coloured" population was widely used. It is not a term that could be used today without causing offence. This was replaced by the term "population of New Commonwealth ethnic origin", while today we speak of ethnic groups, thus covering the whole population, both majority and minority groups.

Being in charge of ethnic group statistics was a baptism of fire, particularly for someone who had spent the previous seven years in universities studying for degrees and doing research. It was a time when there was a great deal of political interest in the topic, some generated by Enoch Powell, and there were times when the subject got front page news in all the national media. There was a great deal of suspicion about the reasons for producing information on ethnic minority groups. For example, there were fears that the information could be used at a future date in some repressive way such as formulating policies on repatriation or for limiting the inflow of dependants of those household heads who had already settled in Britain. Even centralized advisory bodies such as the then Community Relations Commission needed convincing that accurate statistics might actually help them with their work (this organisation comprised noted academics and a number of life peers).

I was interested in the debate about ancestry because we included a question on parents' countries of birth in our 1971 Census. The pattern of immigration to the U.K. from the New Commonwealth had been such that there would have been very few second generation families in 1971. The answers were reasonably reliable. An error rate of around five percent for both the country of birth of mother and country of birth of father compares fairly well with the respondent error rate for the answers to some other census questions. However, there were two problems. Firstly, the imprecision in the relationship between country of birth and ethnicity. Second, there were some objections to including the question in a compulsory census. The point was made that some people had to actually ask their parents where they were born in order to complete this question which was required by law.

During the 1970s there was some tempering in the general adverse climate about measuring ethnicity. Why did this happen? I think there were two main reasons. Firstly, repressive measures had not resulted from collecting information on parents' countries of birth in the 1971 Census. Second, and more importantly perhaps, there was a growing feeling that the provision of accurate statistics might help by illustrating potential areas of discrimination. A milestone was the Race Relations Act of 1976. Further, there was the facility, under statute, for obtaining funds specifically aimed at making special provision for "immigrants and their dependants".

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A question on ethnic group was not included in our 1981 Census, though it is interesting to note that an ethnic group question was included in the Labour Force Survey in the late 1970s.

Turning to the 1980s, what enabled us to include a question on ethnic group in our census? I think the most significant change was in the attitudes and views of organizations representing ethnic minority groups. I undertook two national tours in preparation for the 1991 Census (one in 1987 and another in 1990) when a range of issues on the ethnic group question was discussed with ethnic minority group organizations such as local community relations councils. While some time was spent debating the definitions of ethnicity and race and how they are related, the major concern was with the categories to be included in the question. For example, quite a few people asked why the then proposed question did not include a category for Black British. However, despite such questions, there were many who felt that it was important to get a question included in 1991 to set a precedent. Refinements to the question could be considered for a future census. The two main points that emerged at those meetings were:

1. a growing awareness of the value of census information as the only reliable source for small areas or small groups. A comment frequently made was that it was much better when working in the race relations field to have sound statistical information than to have to rely on poor quality information or best guesses.
2. a more positive attitude to the inclusion of a question in the census of population as a result of an increase in ethnic monitoring in other areas, such as health, employment and public services. Incidentally, you might be interested to know that the Criminal Justice Act of 1991 makes provision for ethnic monitoring of all involved in the criminal justice systems though the practicalities and details are still being worked out.

Despite these general positive responses which were clearly helpful in getting an ethnic group question included in the 1991 Census, there were still a few who were concerned about the potential misuse of the actual census forms themselves should a malevolent government seize power. This view was often dispelled by people from ethnic minority groups who pointed out that using census records would be an exceedingly inefficient way of identifying ethnic minorities. The other question asked was how the collection of statistics had helped in the past. In closing this introduction I would like to quote what our minister said in parliament when the census legislation was being debated in December 1989: "Information on ethnic group will improve the information bases for identifying and tackling discrimination and disadvantage and for the allocation of resources to and by local and health authorities".

The first attempts to devise a question to provide information on ethnic group were begun in 1975 by Ken Sillitoe in preparation for the 1981 Census. The purpose for such a question in Britain was to distinguish reliably people who belonged to ethnic groups which were susceptible to discrimination.



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The census was, of course, the essential vehicle for a question used to monitor and measure such discrimination at the local level. An early difficulty was that there was no internationally agreed upon classification which could be used. This is hardly surprising; the countries that do include ethnic group in their censuses have populations of differing origins and diverse cultures. Classifications can depend on country of origin of a person's ancestors or can depend on their religion, on language, on caste or tribe as well as appearance. The only way to find out how the question needed to be expressed in Britain was to use an empirical approach to test a variety of different designs on samples of all the main ethnic groups.

Britain has always absorbed people from different ethnic groups – Vikings, Normans even Anglo-Saxons were all immigrants at one time. More recently there have been arrivals from Western and Eastern Europe seeking political or religious tolerance or economic advancement. The only unusual thing about the influx which began in significant numbers in the 1950s was that the latest arrivals, drawn mainly from the British Commonwealth, were clearly distinguishable from the indigenous population by the colour of their skin.

Research showed that Black and Asian people tended to be disadvantaged in British society, to have high levels of unemployment, less well-paid jobs and poorer housing conditions, for example. It was also obvious that in order to monitor and combat this disadvantage good quality information was needed on the circumstances of ethnic minority groups.

A question on ethnic group was likely to include reference to skin colour or appearance and it would be difficult not to include an explicit reference to race. There was, however, concern about whether such racial characteristics should be used in a classification scheme at all.

The problem is that the concept of race was connected with the wide-spread belief that there are hereditary, temperamental and intellectual differences between different races. What we now believe is that we are dealing with a different concept, the concept of ethnic group. What we mean by an ethnic group is a socially distinct community of people who share a common history or culture and often language and religion as well. What has to be faced, however, is that when ethnic groups also tend to have physical characteristics, such as skin colour which make them distinguishable, then it is sometimes necessary, in order to make the scheme work, to derive a classification which does include some references to those characteristics. Some go so far as to say the essential difference between ethnic groups is colour and that no further refinement is necessary. They would suggest that we can monitor discrimination quite adequately with a classification such as White, Black and Asian or even White and non-White. Up to a point this is true, of course, but on the other hand all our research suggests that for the classification to be understandable and acceptable, it has to be cast in terms which people recognize and find meaningful. This results in a classification scheme which is more extended than the simple language of colour.



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The method which was adopted in most of the field trials was to select a sample of people from target ethnic groups (including Whites) and to try out different question types and wordings on the different groups. Identifying ethnic groups in Britain can sometimes be achieved by selecting certain names from the electoral register. Sometimes it's more difficult and we have to sample randomly in areas where it is known from country-of-birth data that there are likely to be high concentrations of persons from certain ethnic groups.

A trial census form was delivered to each of the sample households. Interviewers collected the forms and asked the form-fillers questions about any difficulties they might have had with them. The interviewers in this instance were trained social survey interviewers and not the usual temporary staff recruited for the census operation.

### **Figure 1 (see *Ethnic Group and the British Census* p. 275)**

By 1977 the question in figure 1 was being recommended by Ken Sillitoe for censuses and surveys. It is a simple and direct enquiry about ethnic groups, couched mainly in the terms which the groups used to describe themselves at that time. Now the main difficulty with this question was the classification of people of West Indian descent. People of African or Caribbean origin felt it was inappropriate to describe people who had been born in Britain in terms of their forebears' geographic origins. A fact which had already emerged, and which was seen again and again in subsequent trials, was that Black people objected more frequently than any other group to being asked any questions about their race or ethnicity on principle or because they were suspicious about the reasons for collecting the information.

The next stage was to introduce a category which was specifically intended for people of African or Caribbean origin who had been born in Britain. This might have been, for example, Black-British. Prior to the 1981 Census, however, this was not pursued and neither was a question adopted which included the term White. It was believed at the time that the use of a colour term in a classification was in itself racist and should be avoided. The final field trial before the 1981 Census, carried out in 1979, included a question which referred to the indigenous population as "English, Welsh, Scottish or Irish" but was otherwise like figure 1.

I do not think that question would ever have been satisfactory in a census. The implication that if you are of West Indian or Asian origin then you could not be English was probably a mistake. The question failed, however, because cooperation from the public was seriously affected by a campaign which urged people not to answer any questions about their ethnic group on the grounds that the collection of the information was linked to proposals to change the nationality laws in ways that would jeopardize the status of all ethnic minorities in Britain. So effective was this campaign, mounted in 1979, that an alternative question which asked about parents' countries of birth also had to be dropped, despite having been used successfully in the 1971 Census.

The 1981 Census went ahead without a question on ethnic group and was a success, although many felt that by not collecting information on ethnic groups an opportunity had been missed. About that time a question similar to that which I have already shown was successfully included on some of the larger national social surveys in Britain but the lack of detailed information which only the census could provide was sorely felt.

The members of the Home Affairs Committee of the House of Commons were among those who regretted the decision not to include a question in the census. Their report emphasized the usefulness of the information and recommended another question which is shown in the next figure. The notable features of this suggested question are:

**Figure 2 (see Ethnic Group and the British Census p. 276)**

1. the use of colour terms in the classification;
2. the use of Black-British and similar concepts.

The government accepted the Committee's recommendations in principle and asked the Census Offices to continue to carry out research into a suitable question. This second series of field trials began in 1985. An early finding was that terms such as Black-British, and particularly British-Asian, could not be limited to persons born in Britain. The objection was that many citizens of the British Commonwealth not born in the United Kingdom naturally wanted to be described as British.

**Figure 3 (see Ethnic Group and the British Census p. 278)**

Figure 3 illustrates a later attempt to implement the recommendations of the Home Affairs Committee by allowing for both Black-British and British-Asian. This question allowed persons who were not born in the U.K. to describe themselves as British-Asian or Black-British if they felt this applied. The consequence was that in practice the question could only reliably distinguish between Whites, Blacks and Asians and that more subtle distinctions between Black, West Indian and African, for example, could not reliably be made. It was believed that this loss of information would be worthwhile if the question were to prove popular with some of the groups who had objected to questions about ethnicity in the past. Although the question was more popular with Blacks than some of the other questions tested previously, the data quality was very poor. This was partly due to the complexity of the question layout and partly due to the very real problem which some people of Asian origin had: though they thought of themselves as British, they also identified strongly with one or other of the Asian groups. Taken together with the loss of information which was inevitable with such a question, it was decided not to pursue this line of questioning further. Instead, it was decided to return to questions similar to that which had been recommended following the field trials of the seventies.



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This would be a question similar to that illustrated in the first slide but with Black substituted for West Indian. In effect, we had decided to go back to the earlier design, provided that terms such as Black and White were now considered acceptable. The only drawback we could see was that some would continue to regret the omission of the term Black-British. Following further consultation, the final census test in 1989 included the question shown here.

The question had been developed further because of comments received from representatives of Black groups that more detail was required about the ethnic groupings of Black people. The result of the 1989 census test was that the question was not a significant cause of nonresponse. Less than one half percent of potential form fillers declined to cooperate because of the question. The proportion of Black informants who objected to the question on ethnic group was, at 19 percent, almost the lowest level of objection recorded in any of the tests since 1979. The general standard of the answers to the questions was also good. There was a clear improvement for all ethnic groups in accuracy between the 1979 test and the 1989 test.

Why should this be? We think that the exhaustive program of testing and consultation did eventually come up with a good basic design which was acceptable to the public and produced worthwhile results. Specifically, early doubts about the use of terms such as Black and White had been discounted. The most likely explanation, however, is that over the decade ethnic monitoring was becoming much more widespread and generally accepted. Familiarity in answering questions about ethnic group in other contexts, such as when applying for public housing or for jobs, makes it seem more natural and less objectionable when the same question appears in the census.

The question is a compromise between obtaining the detail we would like and providing a wording which the members of the public understand and will answer. It will attract criticism from those who do not think it goes sufficiently far as well as from those who continue to worry about the purpose of the question. We believe, nevertheless, that we now have a question which works and which provides useful information, particularly for monitoring racial disadvantage.

How did the ethnic group question go in the 1991 Census? Let me generalise a little first. We had three main concerns at the field stage. The first was that the introduction in 1989-90 of a local population tax, the community charge, might lead to the census being used as a vehicle for public protest against this new system of revenue generation. After all, the census is very public, an exercise that involves every household, and we were a little concerned that the census could be used in this way, possibly even by those who were supportive of carrying out a census. We had a stroke of luck. At the end of March the government announced that community charge would be replaced by a new property tax. There was no organized campaign. The second concern was that, for a variety of reasons, we might fail to make personal contact with households – different working patterns, more one-person households, fear of answering the door, particularly in inner cities, covert refusals. This did turn out to be a problem and we had



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to introduce contingency measures such as a mail out to the worst areas from the processing office and the use of a freepost facility. Our third concern was the ethnic group question. We had tested and consulted widely; but what would happen in the compulsory census? Would people willingly fill in the form? In general, it went very well. There was no major opposition to the question. Some individuals objected by writing to their member of parliament or directly to us but most of these appeared, from their names and what they said, to be White.

Our paper also contains information on how the "write-in" answers were coded and how these additional categories are being dealt with in output. I will mention one issue: late in the day there was an intense lobby from certain Irish groups to include an Irish category in the question. We pointed out that it was too late to consult widely and to test a question with this category separately identified. However, we agreed to produce a count of those persons who ticked the other box and wrote in "Irish" and to publish this count and the count for all other categories used in coding the write-in answers for each local authority in the country. We also describe in the paper how the write in categories have been reallocated in output to one of the specified categories in the question itself in order to minimize the size of the residual "rag-bag" group. It will be noted that we also had three categories for persons of "mixed descent".

Finally, the paper includes a summary of output plans. I would like to draw your attention to a few key points, namely:

1. that we consulted widely on potential uses.
2. at the lowest area level we produce statistics for enumeration districts, containing typically about 200 households. Thus, figures are available for small areas and five tables in this set include a classification by ethnic group. Not a great deal of detail is given in order to acknowledge concerns on confidentiality which were expressed during the debate in Parliament on the census legislation.
3. there will be a national report which, in particular, will include a cross classification of ethnic group and country of birth.

In conclusion, I might also mention that for the first time in the U.K., two samples of anonymized records are to be produced. North Americans may be more familiar with alternative terminology such as microdata or public use tapes. These samples are being produced at the request of, and payment by, the Economic and Social Research Council for use mainly in the academic community. There is a one percent sample of households with a very broad geography; the other is a two percent sample of persons with a finer geography but, even so, a minimum population of 120 thousand people per area (local government districts or a grouping of them). Included in these samples will be a ten-category classification of ethnic groups.

## *National Experiences in the Measurement of Ethnicity*

### **John Cornish (Australia)**

First, a little background about Australia because people often ask me where it is and some are surprised that we speak English – we do speak English but your problem will be it is with an Australian accent. Australia is a long way from here, our population is just on 17 million people and population growth of 1.5 per cent per annum is around half from natural increase and the other half is from migration, so migration contributes quite significantly. At the last census approximately one fifth of the population was born overseas and at the moment our immigration level is, depending on economic circumstances, anywhere between 100 and 150 thousand people per year. The mix of immigrants has changed quite substantially over the years – the major source countries are now in Asia, reflecting our proximity to Asia, and we are taking less (but still very significant numbers) migrants from our traditional sources, particularly the United Kingdom. With such significant immigration, it helps to understand how we came to pay increased attention to measuring ethnic origin in our census.

Until the 1970s the traditional questions that were included on our census forms such as birthplace met user needs and had no reaction from the population. In fact, we have been asking a question on birthplace since we had our first national census in 1911 and prior to that we had separate censuses of our individual states. We have also been asking a question on religion since 1911, although that is the only question on our census form that is optional. Since 1971 we have been asking questions on birthplace of parents to get data on second generation migrants. In every census we have asked a question to identify the Aboriginal population and I am embarrassed to say that in the early years this was basically to exclude them from the count, which was a requirement of our constitution until that was amended in 1967. There is no discrimination now in the legal sense and we will continue to ask an Aboriginal question in its own right because it is perhaps the most important ethnic/racial origin question that we have on our form. Funds are provided by the federal government to each of the state governments based on the counts of the Aboriginal population in the census. Very few funds are actually tied to counts of any other ethnic or racial group in our country.

In the 1980s, prior to the 1986 Census, we spent a fair bit of time coming up with a question to measure the ethnic origin of the population. This was in response to increasing pressure, not so much from people to use the data but because of ethnic groups wanting to be represented in the census. I think someone earlier on used the phrase "perceived representation" and that was basically where the push was coming from.

We established in the early 1980s a small committee of some professional users from the academic world, people representing ethnic groups and also a representative from our Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs. I was secretary to that committee and we spent several years consulting with various groups and testing questions until we finally came up with a question for which we sought Government approval to include in the 1986 Census. In Australia the final



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decision on census questions rests with the Parliament. The results of the committee's work are available in a report that is mentioned at the back of my paper. If anyone wants to find out the details of any test of the various questions, then I refer you to that paper.

In terms of the data requirements or the pressures that we had to consider, they basically came down to two approaches; one was for group identification, which is concerned with establishing the ethnic group or groups with which people currently identify. It focuses on people's current perceptions, irrespective of their origins. Most of the representation from the ethnic groups was for inclusion of a question of this type in the census. The other approach is what we call historically determined, that is the aim is to determine the ancestry or origin of the respondent. In many ways it addresses the past rather than the present but objectively it is an easier thing to measure and that was certainly our experience in the field testing. Of course, the split between self-perceived and historical determination is not pure and in practice each question usually has some aspect of the other dimension in it.

In my paper I have listed the various questions that we tested to determine group identification, which is all about trying to find the ethnic group with which someone identifies. The word common to the questions is "ethnic", and to some extent other phrases such as "origin" and "group". Our experience is that using the word "ethnic" does not work very well with the population in Australia. There is a traditional perception, probably from our British origin, that ethnics are people from the Mediterranean and, therefore, most of the people believed that this question was not relevant to them and they usually didn't answer it. Once people do not answer a question we are never quite certain whether it is because they didn't think it was relevant or they missed it or they didn't understand it or something else. So we pay a lot of attention to nonresponse rates in testing and if a question has a high nonresponse rate, then we will not recommend it for inclusion in the census.

With the other set of questions centred around ancestry, one variation that we tested is the list of examples that we provided on the test form. Like the experience in America that we heard about earlier, we have certainly found that the listing of examples can influence the responses that you get. We believe from testing that we need to keep the list of examples to the minimum necessary to help people who have difficulties with the question. We have some evidence from our pilot testing that people who do not understand the question will try to pick an answer from the examples chosen. They seem to think that is what is required of them and so you get lots of people who were born in some places inconsistent with their reported ancestry and that is confirmed when you go back and talk to them.

After testing those nine questions, we then had the problem of deciding whether one was actually suitable for inclusion in our census form. It might be worthwhile pointing out that the Australian Bureau of Statistics has a mission of assisting and encouraging informed decision-making, research and discussion and we pay a lot of attention to making certain that we assist



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informed decision-making. We had to determine, therefore, whether the inclusion of any one of these questions with obvious problems would be assisting informed decision-making or whether in fact it would be resulting in uninformed decision-making. A number of the questions, we believe, would not assist in informed decision-making and we ruled them out.

We had some criteria that we set for deciding between the different approaches. One is whether the approach stands on its own. We conduct our census with a drop-off and pick-up method and we were not too keen on having our interviewers being required to provide a lot of assistance on the doorstep because this would increase the cost of the census. We also wanted to make quite sure that the question had wide spread acceptance because we know from past experience that if something is not quite right with a questionnaire or your procedures, then the whole census can be in jeopardy. We did not want to have other important items from the census form jeopardized by a question with a lot of adverse reaction.

We also wanted to make certain that we were getting additional data from the question because we do have other questions on the census form that provide some information on the ethnic composition of the population – while such data are not perfect, they do provide some information. We ask questions on birthplace, birthplace of parents, language used and religion, so we wanted to make certain that we were getting some value out of the extra questions. And last but not least is the obvious criteria of whether the data are valid and reliable.

Against these criteria the ancestry question came out to be far better than the self-identification type questions. The result was that our 1986 Census included a question which I'm sure those here from the United States would find quite familiar. Again, I remind you that we kept the list of examples as short as we could.

After doing some further testing we also found that it was necessary to include some instructions on the household booklet that accompanies the delivery of the census form and this is where you start to be a little bit more pragmatic. I do not think we have been as pragmatic as David Pearce explained for the U.K. but I certainly think this is where you could start to influence the responses. What we found on further testing is that a number of people said that while they had no objection to the question, they did not know how to answer it because they did not know how far back to go in their ancestry. After consulting with our major users we concluded that it would be acceptable if we told people that they could go as far back as their grandparents if they couldn't go back any further.

We also had questions from respondents having trouble reporting mixed ancestry, while the users were basically saying they would have trouble working with mixed responses and that they would prefer that the responses be as simple as possible. I'm not so sure that this is really the way we should be doing it but nevertheless we told people of mixed ancestry who do not identify

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with a single group that they should answer with their multiple ancestry (i.e. I think we led some people of mixed ancestry to report a single ancestry).

The last part of the instructions is something that I wanted to really point out and that is to do with Australian being an acceptable response. One feature of Australia that you may or may not know is that we are fairly nationalistic in lots of ways and the ABS believed that we would never be able to conduct the census successfully if we did not allow Australian to be an acceptable response. Not only that, we would have to openly tell people that it was an acceptable response. What that actually means when interpreting the data I'm not sure and I have been waiting for some time to try and work out how the users actually cope with the Australian responses among all the other responses.

Now, some information on quality – the nonresponse rate to the question was seven percent. This is still higher than most other census questions but I think, in the light of the experience in all the pilot testing and overseas, it is not too bad. The interesting thing is that for the overseas-born population who are really the key groups of interest to users, the rate is less than two percent, so in fact the data are most accurate for the groups that we are really after. There was only a small number of people just simply writing in mixed or not known or some other answer.

The answers to the ancestry question were generally consistent with the answers to the other questions. We studied on a sample basis the consistency of people's answers to the birthplace questions, the Aboriginal origin question, etc., and the consistency is quite acceptable. Where the answers are inconsistent there are mostly sound reasons for that inconsistency. The level of multiple ancestors is an underestimate and perhaps that could be due to the instructions accompanying the question which may have steered people toward reporting a single response rather than a multiple response.

One in five people reported Australian ancestry. There is an interesting debate going on in our country at the moment on whether we should be a republic and completely break our ties with England because the Queen of England is still Queen of Australia. The government is finding that there is strong (but not overwhelming) support for becoming a republic and I suspect if we were to run a census now we would find a much higher number of people reporting Australian for all sorts of reasons. But it's interesting to note the main reason why people said that they reported Australian ancestry – that is that they believed they had a long family history in Australia, usually of at least three generations, and as far as they are concerned they are Australian. There is also a feeling of being Australian among some adult persons born in Australia with parents born overseas and a feeling among a small proportion of overseas-born parents that their children born in Australia are Australian.



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A paper published in the week before I left Australia by Siew-Ean Khoo (a former Bureau employee) on the consistency of ancestry reporting between parents and children shows that the ancestry distribution of children is only slightly different to that of the adults; and that parents are less certain about answering the ancestry question for their children when the parents have differing or multiple ancestry. I should stress here that we find from studies that somewhere around 50 percent of the census questions are actually filled in by someone else as there is often someone in the household who is filling it in for all members of the household. This was one of the worries we had during testing. There is also some further analysis in that paper of the consistency of reporting between parents of similar ancestries and their children.

In terms of use made of the data, while writing my paper I checked with most of the major known users of the data and, as we expected, they are being used primarily for research purposes into those groups that are better defined by the ancestry question than the previous questions on birthplace, etc. I was not able to find any government decisions that were made based directly on the results of the question. I was briefed by the Immigration Department, whose minister is constantly being lobbied by ethnic groups, that he has found the information to be extremely useful in terms of denying claims that are made about the size and influence of those ethnic groups in the country. Perhaps that might be the most useful purpose of the data; if it is reliable, then it is being used for informed decision-making rather than uninformed decision-making.

The Bureau was under a lot of pressure to cut the cost of the 1991 Census and, in fact, it looked like being only a head count census. However, intense lobbying by users resulted in close to a full size census. During that consultation process we were able to convince the users of the data that the census question on ancestry was not needed every five years, that it would be suitable for collection every ten years. You do have to keep in mind that this question does incur a fair cost to process, something like one million dollars if you include all the overheads. Because it is a write-in question, it is clerically intensive, even with computers to assist with the coding. We thought it was quite difficult to justify its inclusion every five years in terms of the cost and I was pleased to say that most of the researchers that I've spoken to also agreed with that--this is unusual as they usually don't take in to account the cost of collecting the data, only their own requirements.

I have no doubt that we will be subjected to intense lobbying for inclusion of the ancestry question in the 1996 Census. There is some still residual lobbying from various ethnic groups for us to include a question on self-identification rather than ancestry but I don't think that, given our experience to date, we will consider that at all. The likely approach will be to maintain consistency and keep the ancestry question so that at least we can have two sets of data on the same basis and we will have a better understanding of what the data are showing over that time period. If we were to change the question, no matter how minute, the influence of that on any analysis is so great that you really don't know what is going on half the time.



Last but not least, at the end of my paper is information on our Aboriginal origin question. We have done a number of tests and we are quite happy in terms of the performance of that particular question. However, it is a self-identification question and the number of Aboriginals counted is very much dependent on their willingness to be included in the census and to answer the question. This willingness is influenced by both the success of any public awareness campaign and community attitudes at the time. When we trace the counts from that particular question over time, it is very difficult to understand the movements from census to census. They are up and down and usually the growth between censuses is much greater than we would ever expect for demographic reasons. Presumably it's because we are doing a better job each time at persuading groups to be included and they feel more prepared to count themselves as Aboriginal than they did in the past.

### **Teik Huat Khoo (Malaysia)**

It may be useful to begin by indicating where Malaysia is located. Malaysia is a tropical country situated in the heart of South East Asia. Peninsular Malaysia extends from the Thai border to Singapore while the States of Sabah and Sarawak are separated by the South China Sea on the northwest of Borneo Island.

### *Background Information on Rationale for Collecting Ethnic Information*

Malaysia is a multi-cultural country. It is a democratic and independent country practicing the parliamentary system of government with a constitutional monarchy. Until 1957, Malaysia was a British colony. As part of the political and social contract for the independence agreement, a federal constitution was developed. Race and ethnic groups are specifically listed in the various articles of the constitution. One of the articles provides for the special position of the Malays and other indigenous groups of the country as well as the protection of the legitimate interests and languages of the other races or communities. The agreed upon special privileges in the constitution were a quid pro quo as overnight millions of immigrants were granted citizenship with this agreement. This background on the political and social contract is necessary to understand the practice of ethnicity in Malaysia.

The Malays and indigenous groups are the predominant group and are nearly 60 percent of the population; the Chinese immigrant group about 30 percent; the South Indian immigrant group about 8 to 9 percent; and the remainder about 1 percent. The Malays and indigenous groups are in a relatively lower economic position than the immigrant groups so that affirmative action programs and projects are the very basis of government planning. The government has formulated and implemented a series of five-year development plans with the single objective of creating national unity in this multi-racial country by trying to reduce and eventually

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eradicating poverty, irrespective of race, and eliminating the identification of race with economic functions. We can call it the mission of the country.

The collection of ethnic statistics and population statistics of ethnic groups are the very rationale of all we publish; it is set up that way. Although the constitution says "race", the very definition enshrined in the constitution gives way to an ethnic definition. For example, the definition of a Malay in the constitution says nothing about race, although we know race and ancestral roots are major elements of ethnic groups. The constitution stresses religion. If a person is Malay, or a race of Malay stock, but not professing the Islam religion or practicing the Malay customs or speaking the Malay language, then constitutionally and legally that person is not a Malay. That individual would not be given the special position of a Malay. Other ethnic groups or other races at the periphery who decide to be assimilated in the ethnic Malay group – that is, adopt or convert to the Islam religion, practice the Malay customs and habitually speak the Malay language – will be given or will be considered for whatever special privileges this enshrines. This provides background on why we have to collect certain ethnic information.

In practice, the race or ethnic element is always present in the data on major ethnic groups collected in the census as well as all population statistics, other government statistics and administrative and enforcement functions. For example, all citizens 12 years and above have to carry an identity card which includes the race or ethnic group of the person. This card is an official document which will allow a person or citizen to apply for privileges when they are available, for example, for special positions, special scholarships or special licensing for doing businesses.

### *Ethnic Related Questions in the 1991 Census*

There emerged a new problem for the 1991 census because of the large numbers, hundreds of thousands, of illegal immigrants that come to the country. They move in from Indonesia (the largest group of illegals) and South Philippines and a few come from Thailand and Burma because Malaysia is a booming country. For example, Malaysia has one of the highest per capita incomes of the region. When the illegals come in, we have a problem. Some of the illegals, for example from Indonesia, have an affinity to the Malay group but they may not be Islam.

In our 1991 census we used a very simplistic approach, asking three questions. One question on ethnic group is: To what ethnic group, community or dialect group do you belong? We leave it to the respondent to self identify; we give a list to prompt or assist the respondent. The second question we ask is: What is your religion? We then list Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism and a whole list of other religions. This particular question helps us further refine the eventual classification of an ethnic group for the person. For example, this



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question indicates whether a person of an indigenous group has forsaken his Islamic religion or not. If the person is not of the Islam religion, technically he/she should not be in the native group. And then we ask a final question: What is your citizenship? For example, a Malay from South Africa who is not a citizen from Malay would be classified as a non-native.

So how successful are these three questions used in 1991? At this present stage we can't say. I feel that the jury is still out but I feel that we should get acceptable answers at least at the broad group classification.

### *Trends on the Ethnic Composition of Malaysia*

I will now give you an idea of the changing trends of the ethnic composition of the country. For the 1980 census we have separated the ethnic groups from the Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak because of political reasons. The indigenous group is the Malay. For the Peninsular of Malaysia, the Malay group increased relatively fast between 1970 and 1980, by 2.7 percent; the Chinese group had the lowest at 1.6 percent; and the South Indian at 1.8 percent. The Chinese had the lowest growth primarily because of lower fertility and out migration. In contrast, high fertility contributed to the growth of the Malay. Between 1970 and 1980 the Malay group as a percent of the total population of the Peninsular of Malaysia grew from 52.7 to 55.3 percent; and the Chinese dropped from 55.8 to 53.8 percent. For Sabah, the immigrant Chinese group dropped from 31 to 16 percent. In 1991 it will drop much further. For Sarawak, the proportions are quite stable. However, in Sabah, which borders Indonesia and the Philippines, I think the illegals could become equal to the locals.

The 1991 groups were basically the same as in 1980. We show the Peninsular of Malaysia separately because of a slight change in the political division. For the 1980 census I had two problems that had to be decided by my cabinet. For example, for Sabah, we had the individual ethnic groups and the native groups; some of the native groups wanted to be shown separately. At that time the government in power, for political reasons, decided all indigenous groups would be identified by a new term.

With Sarawak, I would like to point out it has a very self protected and inward classification written into the constitution. The indigenous groups – Malay and other indigenous groups – are constitutionally defined as natives and they are the privileged group in rights, land and so forth. The offspring of intermarriage can only be considered as natives under the constitution if they intermarry between any of these groups. Even persons from Peninsula Malaysia who marry in one of the native groups is not a native of Sarawak. It is a self protective system.

Finally, we have not assessed our 1991 census results but the 1991 ethnic groups were basically the same as in 1980. Our current population estimates give some indication of the present trends. The Malay group of Peninsula Malaysia is increasing but the Chinese group is slowly



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decreasing and the Indian group is about stable. In Sabah, the Chinese group is showing a declining trend while the indigenous group is slowly increasing. The predominant group is increasing; the classification is primarily political, it is not purely a technical classification. The classification is in the constitution and we can't do very much about it. As we know, in practice, the major predominant group will have more influence.

### **Galina A. Bondarskaya (U.S.S.R.)**

The Soviet Union, a State which existed for almost seventy years and which ceased to exist at the end of 1991, was one of the most multi-ethnic countries in the world. This ethnic diversity was an extremely important factor in the overall political, economic, cultural, social and attitudinal diversity of the country. Now the issue of ethnicity has taken on an urgent and very painful aspect and has, to a considerable extent, been the underlying cause of the disintegration of the USSR, the fall of the Communist regime and the exacerbation of the conflicts found in a number of the former Soviet republics. The experience of the last ten years and, in particular, of the last few years has shown us that the question of obtaining comprehensive statistical information about the ethnic nationalities is one of today's most pressing issues.

The current system of surveying the ethnicity of the population employs two systems for determining the ethnic affiliation of an individual - one based on his or her own statement and one based on documentary evidence from administrative records. Both of these systems presuppose that every individual belongs to one and to only one ethnic community. From any point of view this is a convention that, given the intensive processes of assimilation, forces us to ignore the potential ethnic diversity of an individual's background.

The divergence of the fundamental principles and rules used in determining ethnic affiliation in these two systems suggests that there may be discrepancies in the information relating to the ethnic affiliation of one and the same person in various sources of information. This gives rise to the problem of limitations in the comparability of the information.

Ethnic demography is of prime significance where many demographic indices in the ethnic sector are obtained by comparing census data and information provided by current statistics based on administrative records such as the internal passport. The degree of discrepancy in information from various sources and the effect such discrepancies have on the accuracy of the indices involved has not yet been investigated. In 1990-1991, however, Aleksandr Susokolov carried out a study of the problems involved in identifying and establishing the population figures for four small ethnic groups in Russia and on the quality of the information obtained from censuses and from administrative data. He comes to the conclusion that census data are a more reliable source of information relating to the linguistic and ethnic composition of a population than are current population statistics based on administrative records.

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In some cases the collection of ethno-statistical data has been subjected historically to direct political pressures. Thus, there were instances when for political motives entire ethnic groups were renamed or were simply not considered as separate nationalities and their representatives were listed as members of the dominant nationality. Because of pressures arising from the political situation, people tried to hide their nationality, registering affiliation with the main nationality which was not exposed to such pressures. All of this had serious consequences for the psychology of the people involved and continued to have an effect even when circumstances had already changed.

### *Population Censuses and Sample Surveys*

The main source of information on the ethnic composition of the population of the USSR and its individual territories relating to the economic, socio-cultural and demographic characteristics of individual ethnic groups is the population census. Altogether nine comprehensive population censuses have been carried out in the Russian empire and in the Soviet Union. The first, in the Russian empire, was carried out in 1897 and the last in 1989.

The program of the first comprehensive population census carried out in 1897 had no direct question relating to nationality. Rather, it included questions aimed at determining ethnic affiliation indirectly, that is, native language and religion. The question on native language also has appeared on the Soviet population censuses.

In the program for the 1920 population census, a direct question on ethnic affiliation appeared for the first time, that is, "What nationality do you consider yourself to belong to?". Starting with that census and on all subsequent population censuses the ethnic affiliation of the respondent was recorded on the basis of the respondent's word, without any need to present documentation; that is to say, it was based on his self-perception and definition of himself. The 1920 census stood out for its detailed consideration of ethnic characteristics and the publication of its results. Altogether this census recognized 190 nationalities, of which 160 were groups whose main territory lay within the boundaries of the Soviet Union.

One of the most notable features of the next census in 1937 was the introduction into its program of questions relating to religion. The preliminary results of this census revealed the huge population losses sustained in the country as a result of repression and the famine of 1933. Moreover, regardless of the religious persecution, more than half of the citizens of the Soviet Union openly acknowledged themselves to be believers. The census was declared to be unsatisfactory and its data incomplete.

The next population census was carried out in 1939. The formulation of the questions relating to nationality and native language remained unchanged from the 1937 census. The question on religion, however, was excluded from the census program.



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Four All-Union censuses were carried out during the post-war period and all of them included questions on nationality in their programs. The formulation of the question relating to the native language repeated from previous censuses. Beginning with the censuses of the 1970's the question on native language was supplemented by a question relating to mastery of a second language. More than one hundred nationalities and ethnic groups were distinguished on the list of nationalities included in these censuses. This full list was usually only used for describing the ethnic language composition of the population. When considered in combination with other characteristics, the number of distinguishable nationalities is significantly smaller. The analytical tables covering all the geographical areas collected in the census are kept in the archives and are now accessible to scientists, although bureaucratic and technical difficulties still need to be overcome.

Sample surveys represent yet another important source of information. Apart from the large number of sample surveys conducted in various parts of the country and which are of local or narrowly specialized nature, the Geographical Department of the USSR Institute of Statistics conducts a series of retrospective surveys on birth and marriage rates on a country-wide scale. Ethnic affiliation was considered to be a factor in matrimonial and reproductive conduct of all the social and demographic groups of the population. As with the population censuses, national affiliation, in this instance that of women, was recorded on a self-defining basis.

### *Current Population Statistics Based on Administrative Records*

#### Internal Passport

Current population statistics are based on personal documents, the main document of citizens of our country being the internal passport that is issued when a person turns sixteen. The passport for registering the population was introduced at the beginning of the 1930's. Recording of ethnic affiliation is based on the ethnic affiliation of the parents. In cases where the parents have different ethnic affiliations, the current rules recommend that the wishes of the person receiving the passport be followed. If there is no preference stated, then it is recommended that the ethnic origin of the mother take precedence. In practice, however, the principle is often violated because the wishes of the recipient of the passport are not as a rule consulted and the ethnic affiliation of the mother is automatically recorded in his/her passport. Thereafter, the information relating to ethnic origin recorded in his/her passport follows a person all his/her life. The passport and its information on ethnic origin has basically a socio-political significance, but it is also used by sociologists, ethnographers and demographers for scientific purposes.

In recent times, the question of eliminating ethnic origin from the passport has arisen more frequently. This could lead to a considerable change in the various systems used to survey the population which apply a documentary approach to the registration of various characteristics. Public opinion, however, has been divided. Taking into account the current situation, it may



be supposed that this record will remain in documents for a long time to come, at least until the question of ethnic origin loses its social and political significance.

### Vital Statistics

The programs for the registration of births, deaths, and marriages and divorces have all been frequently changed during the Soviet period. There have often been differences based on regions and often the initiative was taken by local authorities. Nationality, however, was recognized as very important and has always been taken into account in primary documents.

Standardization of civil records throughout the whole of the USSR was only carried out at the end of the 1970's. For the adult population registration according to nationality was carried out in accordance with the nationality characteristic in the individual's internal passport. Since the end of the 1950's the archives have contained systematic information on births and deaths, while since the end of the 1970's they have maintained information based on nationality and covering marriages and divorces. There has been no fully systematic official publication of these materials. Regarding information on immigration, a strictly controlled administrative registration of the entire population based on place of residence was introduced in the Soviet Union at the beginning of the 1930's.

### Population Movements

In case of a change in the place of permanent residence every person must obtain a permit from the local police station. On the whole, this rule is still in effect. Every time there is a change in the place of residence, documents are drawn up covering the place of departure and arrival. Along with other characteristics, these documents contain a characteristic on nationality. The nationality given is based on the internal passport and only for the adult population. No separate document is issued for children under the age of sixteen leaving or arriving with adults. All the information relating to such children is recorded on the document of one of the parents but the nationality of these children is not recorded. The processing of this information with the inclusion of the characteristics on nationality is carried out only in certain years and then selectively. In particular, in the pre- and post-1979 census years, the distribution of immigrants of various nationalities and over the age of sixteen according to sex and age was obtained.

### Household Surveys

Yet another of the forms of the current population statistics which records the ethnic affiliation characteristic are the so-called household surveys. In rural areas special household registers - that is, a record of all the individuals involved in joint activities and those related to them - are maintained for every household and these record the sex, date of birth, nationality, level of education, place of work, occupation and so on for every member of the family. These registers

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are updated every three years. These have to be verified semi-annually, on the first of January and the first of July. Entries have to be made for every change in the family status arising from births, deaths, marriages, divorce, the separation of young to set up their own households and other data. The information from the households survey is used by statistics agencies in order to calculate population numbers and the composition of the rural population according to sex and age. The nationality characteristic, however, remains unused. There are similar registers in cities as well but they are hardly used for statistical purposes.

### *Conclusion*

At the end of the 1980's and the beginning of the 1990's the situation with regard to ethno-statistical information in the USSR was a fairly happy one. The dissolution of the USSR into a large number of independent states, however, has given rise to considerable difficulties of which we have yet to become fully aware. All the ethnic problems which were characteristic of the former USSR still exist. The study of the ethnic factor has not only not lost its urgency but there is an important need to investigate the ethnic aspect of new social phenomena that have become widespread and more important in recent years, such as foreign emigration, the problem of refugees and so on.

### **3.3 Discussants' Remarks**

#### **Reynolds Farley**

In their paper, Nampeo McKenney and Arthur Cresce provide detailed information about the measurements of race and ethnicity in the United States. The U.S. 1980 and 1990 Censuses used three distinct questions:

#### *Race*

First, a race question was asked of everyone. Race has been an important dimension of political, social and economic life since the English colonists arrived in the seventeenth century, confronted the American Indians and then imported Africans and Caribbeans as labourers. Thus, it is not surprising that every United States census has gathered racial information from all residents. More surprising are the changes over time in the terms used to identify the races.

#### *Spanish-Origin*

Second, a Spanish-origin question was asked of everyone in the last two censuses. Since the Treaty of Guadeloupe Hidalgo ended the war between Mexico and the United States, the Mexican- or Spanish-origin population has been sizable and has had a special status. The war

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between Spain and the United States at the end of the last century facilitated the eventual in-migration of a large Spanish-speaking population.

### *Ancestry or Ethnicity*

Third, a question about ancestry or ethnic origin was asked of a sample of the population. Since 1850 censuses in the United States have asked country of birth and from 1880 through 1970 they asked the country of birth of a person's parents, thereby permitting the identification of the children of immigrants. Because the second-generation population declined in size after World War II, the birthplace of parents question was eliminated from the Census of 1980 and replaced by the open-ended ancestry question. It has the advantage of providing ethnic information for that 70 percent of the population who are Non-Latino Whites, born in the U.S.A., with parents also born in the United States. In 1980, 467 different ancestry codes were used but no religious terms were coded.

### *The Challenges facing a Federal Statistical Agency*

The paper by Nampeo McKenney and Arthur Cresce highlights the many challenges a federal statistical agency confronts when gathering racial and ethnic information. First and most importantly, data about the races and about the Latino population are crucial for the allocation of political power in the United States. The Voting Rights Act of 1965, as amended a decade later and in 1982, prohibits discrimination in the electoral process in all states. The proscribed discrimination is that done on the basis of race or against language minorities. Congress, in 1975, defined language minorities in the United States to include those " ... who are American Indians, Asian-Americans, Alaskan Natives or of Spanish heritage". Federal courts interpreted the Voting Rights Act to mean that electoral districts must be drawn so that they do not dilute the political powers of Blacks, Latinos, Native Americans or Asian Americans. The Voting Rights Act does not provide such special protection to White ethnic groups nor to some language minorities such as the francophone Cajun population of Louisiana.

Second, as Nampeo McKenney and Arthur Cresce tell us, decisions about what questions appear on the census and how they are worded are made by elected members of Congress--that is, by politicians who have strong interest in specific outcomes. Certainly, the staff of the Census Bureau consults with users and devotes a great deal of effort meeting with the public and with experts at conferences such as this one. But final decisions are not made by statisticians, social scientists or by a panel of impartial experts.

Harvey Choldin (1986) documented how officials in the White House added the Spanish-origin question to the Census of 1970. And in the McKenney-Cresce paper you will find the Census Bureau's suggested race question for the 1990 enumeration. Congressman Matsui, however, was



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influential in eliminating that question and replacing it with another that is shown earlier in the same paper.

Third, a census form must be designed so that it may be readily filled out by all adults. It can not include the complicated questions which an anthropologist might use. It can only measure concepts which are widely understood by the population. The results of the 1980 and 1990 Censuses suggest that there is considerable understanding of the ideas of race, Spanish-origin and ethnicity but also much misunderstanding.

There are, perhaps, three ways in which the current questions are confusing to some components of the population. The first concerns racial identification. In the United States, race has traditionally been defined by genotype: skin color and the presence of epicanthic folds. The responses to the race question suggest that all but three or four percent of the population coded themselves into one of the 14 designated racial categories or wrote a response such as French or Italian which could readily be coded into a racial category.

For the Spanish-origin population there may be uncertainty about which response they should give to the race question. Of those 22.4 million who said that their origin was Spanish in 1990, 43 percent wrote a special term for their race, strongly suggesting that a sizeable fraction of the Spanish-origin population treats their Hispanicity as if it were a racial identity.

The other confusion of race and ethnicity may involve the American Indian population. In 1980, 1.4 million (1.9 million in 1990) indicated they were American Indian by race. But another 4.6 million persons said they were White or Black by race and American Indian by ancestry. Thus, some two percent or more of the total population made a distinction between their race – probably their skin colour or appearance – and their ancestry. That is, they thought of their ethnicity as American Indian instead of Italian or Ukrainian.

A second major issue which may confuse many respondents is the meaning of ancestry or ethnicity. There is much evidence demonstrating that ethnicity is no longer an important dimension of social identity for the three quarters of White United States residents whose forebears arrived from Europe in the nineteenth or early twentieth Centuries. Recent books by Mary Waters, *Ethnic Options* (1990), and by Richard Alba, *Ethnic Identity* (1990), report that ethnicity is largely symbolic or optional for most Whites. To be sure, when asked the questions almost all will report some ancestry but they do so inconsistently and often with qualifications. Nampeo McKenney and Arthur Cresce report that the nonresponse rate for the ancestry questions was about 11 percent in the last two censuses and another six percent of respondents wrote the term "American". Within every ethnic group there are some individuals who strongly and consistently report their European origin but they are a minority. For the most part, the ethnic origin of a White individual has little influence upon where they live, how much education they obtain, what they earn and, according to Lieberman and Waters (1988) in *From Many*

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*Strands*, it has less and less consequence for the selection of a marriage partner. As the number of generations since arrival of ancestors from Europe increases and ethnic intermarriage becomes more common, the knowledge of one's ancestry and the quality of such data will decrease.

The transient nature of ethnic identity is evident. In November 1979 the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey pretested the 1980 ancestry question and when the first- and second-reported ethnicities were coded the United States had a population of 40 million English. Five months later, the Census of 1980 reported that 49.6 million claimed English as their ancestry. There was, of course, no great navy of ships arriving in the United States from Liverpool, Southampton or Bristol. Rather, the 1980 Census schedule asked questions about language use. About 90 percent of the population said they spoke only English in their homes and another nine percent said they spoke English well or very well. Immediately after being reminded that English was their mother tongue, respondents were asked their ancestry and many of those who were uncertain about their origin wrote English.

The placement of the ancestry question was changed in the 1990 enumeration and Nampeo McKenney and Arthur Cresce note that the number of English declined to about 35 million. But the "example effects" are still very strong for the ancestry question. Unlike the situation in 1980, the first example of an ancestry answer to appear on the 1990 schedule was German. And the German population apparently grew much more rapidly than one would expect in the United States in the 1980s.

This is not a problem with the ancestry question. It is simply the case that a significant number of Whites do not strongly identify with a specific European ethnicity but feel obligated to answer an ancestry question because everyone knows we all have roots. They answer with a term suggested by the question itself.

A third source of confusion stems from multiple racial identities. In 1980 and 1990 the Census Bureau coded up to two ethnic terms for each respondent and a person could distinguish their race from their Spanish origin, permitting the identification of Black Hispanics and the Spanish-origin population from the Philippines. However, everyone was coded only once by race. In many areas, Asian-White marriages are now common and there is already a demand from some to be coded simultaneously into two racial categories.

### *Suggestions for the Census of 2000*

Let me conclude by offering four suggestions. First, although ultimate decisions about which questions will appear on the census and how they are worded may be made by Congress, they should be extremely well-informed about the measurement of race and ethnicity. The Census Bureau has a high profile in research concerning this topic. I strongly encourage a continuation of this tradition. Now is the time to issue lucid reports about what we learned from the race,



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the Spanish-origin, and the ancestry questions used in 1980 and 1990. It is also the time to pretest a wide variety of possible questions to determine how respondents answer them. Lucid reports describing possible alternatives and their implications should be circulated.

Second, it is appropriate to consider pretesting a question which treats Spanish-origin as if it were a racial category. About a decade ago, I believe, the Census Bureau considered such an experiment but Spanish-origin groups discouraged a pretest, fearing that the size of the Latino population might be decreased a bit by such a question. That is, some Hispanic Blacks and Hispanic Asians might identify themselves as Black or Asian rather than Spanish in origin. Nevertheless, many users of census data treat the Hispanic population as if it were equivalent to a racial category and quite a lot of publications from the 1990 Census have responded to consumer demand by treating Hispanics as if they were similar to a racial category. Appropriate pretests are encouraged.

Third, I would appreciate participating in an evaluation of the pretest of a question which combines the gathering of data about race and ethnicity. The proposed question is shown as Figure 1 in this report. A major objection to a question of this type will come from Hispanic groups who will fear a possible undercount of the Latino population. However, the proposed question provides individuals with two opportunities to report their Latino origin. That is, some will identify themselves as Hispanic by filling in a circle while others will claim White, Black or Asian as their race and then write Spanish, Mexican, Cuban or Dominican for their ethnicity or origin.

Fourth, because of changes in immigration policy, the foreign-born population of the United States and their descendants are now increasing rapidly. There is good reason to consider reviving the dormant question about place of birth of parents. Ideally, it would be good to ask questions about both ancestry and about place of birth of parents. However, cost considerations will influence the Census of 2000, and it may not be possible to include two inquiries. The ancestry question — primarily, but certainly not exclusively — allows us to distinguish components of the European-origin White population. And we find these groups generally do not strongly identify with their ethnic origins and, for the most part, the European-origin groups do not differ greatly in social or economic status (Farley 1989, 1990). Presumably, there are substantial differences among the second-generation population of the United States, so consideration should be given to replacing the ancestry question with the place of birth of parents question.



**Figure 1. Suggestions for Items to be Tested in the 1990s**

1. Question to Simultaneously Obtain Race and Hispanic Identity

**What is the person's identity?**

Fill in only one circle and write appropriate term:

☐ WHITE

Write ethnicity or origin, such as English, German or Czech: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ BLACK

Write ethnicity or origin, such as Jamaican, Nigerian or Ibo: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ HISPANIC

Write ethnicity or origin, such as Mexican, Cuban or Puerto Rican: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ ASIAN OR PACIFIC ISLANDER

Write ethnicity or origin, such as Filipino, Chinese or Thai: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ NATIVE AMERICAN

Write tribe or type, such as Cherokee, Navaho or Eskimo: \_\_\_\_\_

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**T. John Samuel**

The "authentic, unabridged, revised and enlarged" Webster's International Dictionary published in 1891, over a century ago, gives the meaning of ethnic as a heathen; a pagan. It quotes John Milton's reference to "impure ethnics and lay dogs". Later editions of Webster's have been less unkind to ethnics and ethnicity.

The two papers on hand, one American and one Canadian, are concerned with the measurement of ethnicity – past, present and future. One who attempts to measure ethnicity is like a person in the middle of a thick blizzard (more familiar to northerners): the path is uncertain, the vision is hazy and one is not sure where one will end up.

The Statistics Canada paper, well-organized, perceptive and descriptive gives "as completely as possible Canada's collection and measurement of ethnicity" (White et al. 1992, 2) to facilitate comparison of measurement of ethnicity in different countries. The U.S. paper, a very informative one with 1990 data, "presents experiences of the U.S. Bureau of the Census in collecting data on ethnicity" (McKenney and Cresce 1992, 5) in recent years.

The two papers have a lot in common since the national experiences of the two countries have a lot in common. Looking at the past, both countries have been collecting ethnicity data for a long time through their regular censuses. As former British colonies, both countries are dominated by British administrative practices and ethnic groups. The countries have a legislated mandate to collect data. Both are predominantly White. However, the snow-covered North has been whiter. Currently both nations have legislative policies to usher in equality of opportunity for racial minorities and require data to plan programs and to evaluate their success. Looking at the future, these neighbours are expected to have a significant rise in the number of racial minorities by early next century. (Canada to about 13 to 18 percent, including temporary migrants and the U.S. to between 23 and 28 percent). The cataclysmic information revolution and the rapid advances in technology that enable us to digest massive amounts of data are also common to both countries. Furthermore, it is expected that racial and ethnic minorities are bound to demand their due share of power and privileges through the political process in the days ahead.

There are also significant differences in the socio-political environment in which data collection, processing and analysis take place in the two countries. The U.S. population is about 10 times that of Canada and has concomitant economic power which translates into a cultural and media impact on its northern neighbour, especially on its institutions and practices. Examining the foreign-born component of the populations – an important element of ethnicity – in Canada, they are (and have been) more than twice the proportion in the American population. Immigration currently is close to one percent of Canada's population while for the U.S. it is about 0.4 percent. Another difference is that the U.S. tradition has been of the melting pot (whether it



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turned out to be an unmelting pot or not is a different question) while Canada had biculturalism that developed into multiculturalism. Unlike here, the U.S. has only one official language. Most significantly, the census questionnaires receive direct political input from the U.S. Congress while Canadian questionnaires have never penetrated to the level of the Senate or House of Commons for consideration before approval. A race question has never been asked in a census questionnaire in Canada while it was always asked in the U.S. Political pressures concerning data collection, the format of the questions, coverage and the like are much stronger on the U.S. Bureau of the Census than on Statistics Canada.

Now let us take the papers one by one. The Statistics Canada paper gives a comprehensive overview of the Canadian census approach to the measurement of ethnicity starting from 1767. We learn that at the dawn of this century what the Canadian census called "racial origin" was nothing more than ethnic origin and the progeny of native and non-native unions were referred to as "half-breeds" by the census. The ethnic origin of the father was the hallmark of authentic ethnicity, forgetting that maternity is a fact but paternity is only a matter of opinion. The father's ethnicity was considered more important in a society where your life chances were better if you were born with your father's fixtures rather than your mother's. Respondents were forced to prefer one ethnicity and discard all others.

It is not well-known that from 1961 on, reporting "Canadian" or "American" as an ethnic origin was discouraged but accepted as valid. The era of drop-off and mail-back questionnaires started in 1971. Ten years later, multiple ethnicity was surreptitiously introduced by coding the responses written in. At the same time, paternity lost its predominance over maternity.

Despite programs of employment equity (or affirmative action in American terms), race remained a four-letter word, never asked in Canadian censuses. There was extreme reluctance to ask a question based on skin colour. As a result, to obtain data surrogate variables were used. Birthplace, mother tongue and religion had to be used to obtain race-related data.

Looking at the data, many social scientists wondered what is being collected. The data measured ethnic origin to the degree that respondents were aware of and were willing to report it. Undesirable origins were conveniently forgotten by respondents. As an example, in 1941 when some unpleasantness was going on in Europe, certain ethnic origins were less frequently mentioned. Because of the increased use of ethnicity data in the 1980s, the need to not only treat all groups equally, but to be seen to do so, became important.

Now a few points on the U.S. paper. The early years of the U.S. census receive relatively less attention in this paper except that the first Census of 1790 had a question on race. Though they overlap, race and ethnicity are treated as two separate concepts. Some of the other salient points of the paper largely drawn from the 1980 and 1990 Censuses are:

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- Multiple origins were reported if listed.
- Only 55 percent of persons who reported English, Scottish or Welsh ancestry in March 1971 Current Population Survey reported the same exactly a year later.
- Racial minorities grew faster than the total population in 1980-90 decade. In the same period, those reporting German ancestry showed rapid gains at the apparent expense of the English ancestry. This may have been the result of the "example effect" since English was not given as an example in the questionnaire while German was.

The paper admits the difficulty of collecting "ethnic" data that have optimum levels of validity and reliability. The definitions of ethnicity are diverse and the responses to the same question are different at different points in time. For the future the paper proposes that the key players develop a consensus on definition, comparability of concepts and formats be maintained, sound social science research techniques be used and data collection techniques be strengthened.

Now some observations. First, Lieberman and Waters state on the U.S. census that "it is impossible to determine how accurately the ancestry question measures what it is intended to measure" (Lieberman and Waters 1988, 21). On Canada's ethnic origin question, Kralt points out that the census "does not reflect the actual population distribution by ethnic origin but rather the numbers of persons reporting a given origin" (Kralt 1988, 3). As mentioned earlier, in the U.S. in 1971-72 only 55 percent of the same persons reported the same ethnic origin within the short time span of one year. The ethnic origin, "German", showed a significant decline in Canada in 1941. The native people of the U.S. increased four times as fast as the nation as a whole in the 1980-90 period – definitely not through natural increase or migration. Since ethnicity is not a "solely or mostly objectively defensible characteristic", how does one measure with a yardstick that is elastic? Or are we trying to measure the immeasurable?

As referred to in both the papers, and by other experts, there is considerable flux and fluidity in the notion of ethnicity. (Ethnicity studies seem to share some of these aquatic terminologies with immigration, where one talks about flows, floods, spilling, stream, swamp and waves.) Maybe in describing polyethnicity it is time to move away from notions of mosaic, flower garden, the rainbow, the symphony orchestra, patchwork quilt and kaleidoscope to a fruit punch the ingredients of which can easily change, thereby changing the taste itself.

Second point: The U.S. studies show that if the level of ethnic mixing continues, as is very likely, through intermarriage which seem to be increasing in popularity, "we can expect decreasing accuracy in the responses to the origin question and a shift toward a new White subset of the population who are essentially unaware of their European origin" (Lieberman and Waters 1988, 50). It is stated that in 1980 some respondents gave their ancestry as "American", i.e. unhyphenated American, and their origin was the fifth largest in the U.S., edging out groups



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such as the French and the Italians. (I have seen no figures for 1990.) The fact that 55 percent of them were non-White says something very important. It appears that many Americans – and I am sure Canadians as well – whose ancestors have not been in North America for many generations are eager to eliminate the "burden" of the hyphen. The Canadian paper tells us that in the testing of the 1991 Census questionnaire, half the population chose "Canadian" despite the word being at the bottom of the list. Would such developments toll the death knell of ethnicity studies as we know them? Should such reporting be common, is it appropriate to ask the computer to "fix" the problem through surrogacy techniques?

The fact that even recent immigrants would describe themselves as "American" or "Canadian" is rooted in their desire to be accepted as equals and appreciated as worthy. To quote Horowitz, "If the need to feel worthy is a fundamental human requirement, it is satisfied in considerable measure by belonging to groups that are in turn regarded as worthy. Like individual self-esteem, collective self-esteem is achieved largely by social recognition" (Horowitz in Cairns 1989, 114). Minority groups feel the "general urge to be in harmony with one's surroundings, to belong in a territory, to be comfortable and at home" (Ibid).

Third, the ethnicity definition and measurement need to become more future-oriented and program-oriented. The twenty-first century is almost here and on both sides of the shared forty-ninth parallel there is need for increasing awareness and better planning to face the challenges that are ahead. The information revolution is gathering steady momentum; computer chips are relentlessly moving into our lives and work. Sophisticated software has no soft corner for human considerations. To quote Lieberman, "Racial and ethnic groups are not merely static entities, but are also products of labelling and identification processes that change and evolve over time" (Lieberman 1984, 1). The data collected "will be characterized by all sorts of volatile and erratic qualities. These and other inconsistencies need not be interpreted as reflecting errors (underline in original) in either enumeration procedure or in respondent behaviour, although some errors cannot be ruled out" (Ibid, 10).

Regarding labelling, if racial and ethnic groups are viewed not as static entities but as products of labelling, would statistical agencies in the countries concerned consider the implications of alternatives in labelling (if they have the choice) so that measurement becomes less difficult and more comparable? At times such labels are imposed by political forces. It now seems that these labels are adopted without much consultation with the ethnic groups concerned. For instance, towards the late sixties, when the term "Negro" was being replaced by "Black", some argued unsuccessfully that "a Negro by any other name ... would be as Black and as beautiful ... and as segregated" (Bernardo 1981, 156). But the U.S. publication *Ebony* took upon itself the task of conducting a survey to learn the wishes of the Black community. In Canada even less formal consultations have been rare. Do the statistical agencies have a role to play by consulting with target groups? This could lead to an enlightened choice.



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Fourth, inexorable global forces will continue to impact on ethnicity and its measurement in North America and elsewhere. One may legitimately and logically ask, since ethnicity is socially constructed, could it be socially destructed as well? Or would it destruct a few more societies (and countries) as we know them today? Ethnic nationalism is on the rise in many countries from Canada to Sri Lanka. This resurgence (or reincarnation) of ethnicity has surprised many and is the "struggle for recognition, higher economic and social status, and political power by minorities which had previously been exposed to the assimilating pressures of industrialization" (Richmond 1981, 302). A related question is, do the collection and dissemination of ethnic data influence ethnic nationalism?

Finally, if the collection and interpretation of ethnicity data are complex because of problems of definition, terminology, reliability, classification and lack of information on groups, are things going to be any less complex in the future despite improvements in communication and information technologies? I hesitate to be optimistic. Let me conclude with a quotation from Goldberg and Mercer: "For the Canadian resident (I am sure this applies to others, too) whose ... ancestor came from Scotland or the Rhine Palatinate in the mid-nineteenth century, what does this ethnic origin mean? Perhaps it means a great deal, not much, or even nothing" (as quoted in Ray 1988, 1). As far as the measurement of ethnicity is concerned, the thick blizzard is still on, the vision is hazy and one is not sure where one will end up.

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### **3.4 Floor Discussion**

At the conclusion of the day, the co-chair, William Butz, opened the floor to a lively discussion that focussed on a number of concerns. Among the first to be raised were issues of coverage and response. Conference participants were interested in the participation of Aborigines in the Australian census and in the coverage of minorities in general. In Australia there has been a 2 percent overall omission rate, although among Aborigines it has been higher. In Malaysia there is high undercoverage of the "basic" Chinese in urban areas and of indigenous people in rural areas. Britain reported 99 percent coverage in 1981 but expected a lower rate in 1991. Canada reported undercoverage of immigrants and aboriginals and the U.S. had undercoverage of minority groups.

The participants also raised the subject of multiple reporting of ancestry and multiple ethnicities. They were interested to know how these were handled on the census forms and how they were interpreted. All countries reported that they had boxes or spaces for write-ins and all had systems to code multiple responses.

The discussion also centred on how the attending countries deal with the "other" choice in the ethnicity question. Most countries have a write-in "other" option and have a many codes available to assign to written responses. In the U.K. 28 possible codes are available; Canada has over 100 codes.

A question was raised concerning the overlap of religion and ethnicity in censuses. This is an issue for the U.S. census since it does not have a religion question. In the United States religion responses to the ethnic and race questions (for example, Jewish) are coded to a general category.

Another area of significant interest was the possibility of omission or misinterpretation of the question on ethnicity due to its position on the questionnaire. Most census bureaus indicated that a great deal of effort is made to orient ethnic communities to the census questionnaire in general and to the question(s) on ethnicity in particular. Orientation sessions, the establishment of information centres and the translation of questionnaires into minority languages are some of the methods by which countries attempt to ensure complete and appropriate responses to ethnicity questions.

The conference attendees were also interested in the distribution and dissemination of census data to ethnic groups in the various countries. All census bureaus reported that they consult with ethnic groups before planning their publications. The U.S. publishes special publications for ethnic groups in addition to their general publications. The U.S. also has established a number of national information centres targeted at specific ethnic groups. Canada and the U.K. said that while their data products are sold on a cost-recovery basis, they do encourage consortium



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purchasing. Canada further stated that all its products are distributed free to 500 depository libraries across the country.

At the end of the discussion period, the co-chair, William Butz, summarized the days' proceedings by outlining eight themes that had recurred during the day. The following is a resumé of his discussion:

The changing nature of self-perception. Ethnic self-perception seems to be changing rapidly. During the conference a number of instances were recounted of this phenomenon: the enormous growth in the number of persons reporting "Canadian" in the Canadian census; the Irish in the U.K.; the large increase in American Indians between the 1970 and 1980 U.S. Censuses and again between the 1980 and 1990 U.S. Censuses. The instance that was mentioned of people choosing a favoured ethnicity in the Commonwealth of Independent States (C.I.S.) falls into this general pattern.

The interplays between race, ethnicity, colour and language, in the way the questions are asked and peoples' perceptions of these four things. In Canada, race, at least for part of its history, has been viewed as a four-letter word not to be asked. Then there's the Malaysia case. When I lived in Malaysia, Malays, Chinese and Indians seemed to me to be visually very identifiable and yet they are identified there, in fact, not by that but by one's perception of religion, language of the practice and of various cultural patterns. It seems that race, ethnicity, colour and language interact with each other in ways that not only vary across the countries and cultures but also over time.

In light of these factors, the increasing difficulty of measuring and characterizing ethnicity. Today's presentations made it clear that with the exceptions of places where it is becoming very salient and prominent, such as in the C.I.S., the former U.S.S.R., ethnicity is getting muddier and harder to characterize. One reason is the speeded-up shifts in self-perception. Another is that many people appear to have no ethnicity or no salient ethnicity; Professor Farley spoke of the phenomenon of assimilation. Perhaps the reason why there are such sensitivities to how one asks the question or to the answer categories or to the order in which the answers are given on the page is that there may simply be many people who don't recognize that they have an ethnicity.

The conflict between historical continuity and current relevance. The most extreme example we have seen is Canada in 1981 where the continuity was really broken. If it is true that shifts in ethnic self-perception are growing more rapidly, then we might expect this conflict to increase and to worsen. Official statistical agencies will have to face difficult dilemmas more frequently than they have in the past, on the one hand producing data that can be compared easily with was produced five years or 10 years ago

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or on the other hand producing data that are relevant to today. These can't always be done at the same time and the trade-off is getting more difficult.

The sensitivity of the data to the questions asked, the answer categories and the order of the answer categories. The strongest evidence we have here is from the U.S.: the comparisons between the 1980 and 1990 Censuses in the United States. In the case of Canada, there isn't strong evidence of sensitivity but I think in the case of the U.S. we see what's happened to the English groups, the Germans, the Irish and some of the others due to the placement of the answer category, of the example, or the presence or absence of an example.

The role of last-minute changes to questions without benefit of testing. This seems to be a result of the increasing importance of ethnicity and race in public and political perceptions and processes, as well as of the increased participation of interested groups and interested experts. In some countries the last-minute changes came from Parliament or from Congress. In other countries they came from groups who emerged near the end of the process and wanted and got a change in the questionnaire; perhaps statistical agencies need to concentrate on better ways of anticipating or testing things that are may come up towards the end of the development process. How one does that is not clear to me but the trend of the last two decades is indicative. What would be preferable is to find ways to get that input earlier in the process so that relevant alternatives can be adequately tested.

Next to last, the potential enormous importance of the data, even beyond the orderly redistribution of political power and public monies. We know that these data are important for that in many places. The example of the Soviet census in 1936 is, of course, an extreme case where the authorities didn't like the results and they didn't like the people who produced the results and neither of them were seen too much of again. The U.S. in 1920 was a case that wasn't as extreme, the results weren't liked and consequently they weren't used to redistribute the Congress for a decade. In Canada it may be the case today that the results concerning race and ethnicity could potentially be very important in a way that transcends the normal redistribution of power and monies.

Finally, differential coverage of ethnic and racial minorities as a function of the kinds of questions that are asked. Two specific options were proposed today, alternatives for asking race and ethnicity questions. One was Professor Farley's; he put a specific question on the board which collapsed a number of questions into one. One would want to ask, as he did, the effect of this new question on the data and whether it serves all purposes adequately or by trying to serve all masters serve none. We should perhaps test it. Professor Lieberman suggested a multiple questionnaire framework with overlapping questions which is another possibility.





## ***4. The Meanings and Dimensions of Ethnicity***

### **4.1 Introduction**

The second day of the conference opened with a session on the Meanings and Dimensions of Ethnicity. Presentations were given by three well-known scholars, Professors Ronald Cohen, Calvin Goldscheider and Wsevolod Isajiw, who have made significant contributions to the study of ethnicity. Their papers are included in Part 2 of this volume.

In their invited papers all three researchers approached the study of ethnicity from differing perspectives. Mr. Cohen, an anthropologist, focused on its development in the early state and on its effect on moral judgements. Racial and ethnic differences in patterns of social life in pluralistic societies such as the United States and Canada were the subject of Mr. Goldscheider's studies. Mr. Isajiw dealt with the essential dimensions of the phenomenon of ethnicity and indicated the directions of their possible variations.

The three presentations were given without interventions or questions from the floor. They were followed by comments from the session chair, and discussant John de Vries, and then by open discussion from the floor.

### **4.2 Summary of Presentations**

#### **Ronald Cohen**

My paper comes out of earlier work on both ethnicity and the state which were carried out over the last decade. In addition, more recent work on human rights, state-society relations and democratization in Africa have informed my present views and the perspective in the paper. Yesterday, we learned that the Cajuns in Louisiana have increased their reported numbers by 1900 percent in one decade. Obviously, the identity issues that inform such a phenomenal growth in census figures are at the heart of the issues underlying this conference.

For some time now anthropologists have had difficulty adjusting to the dying out of the concept of "tribe". In Africa indigenous intellectuals and leaders regard the notion of tribe as an anathema, a Western-based idea connoting atavistic and uncivilized behaviour, ethnic prejudices and intergroup hostilities. Anthropology, which first used the term, is now trying hard to replace it with the more universal notion of "ethnicity". In previous work I joined in this conceptual revisionism, hoping to redefine ethnicity for wider use in cross-cultural studies.

Many years ago, Max Weber suggested that ethnicity was based on common group sentiments and the experience of common descent. Anthropologists tend, first and foremost, to see things human in terms of fitness outcomes, i.e. as combinations of biological and cultural processes of

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evolutionary adaptation. Thus, ethnicity refers first and foremost to some degree of reproductive isolation. Empirically this refers to the fact that interethnic marriages occur at less than random expectation, indicating some form of boundary between ethnic units. The resulting identities are both subjective, self-defined or objective, that is to say the ethnic unit and its characteristics is defined by outsiders who see the group as an isolatable unit culturally and socially.

In the 1960s a group of researchers led by Morton Fried and Joan Vincent at Columbia University added a political dimension to the older (Weberian) conception. Fried argued that the key defining element in ethnicity lies in its we/they dichotomization in which there is often conflict over scarce resources. I rephrased this idea by suggesting that ethnicity is the result of a series of we/they nesting dichotomizations of varying scale of inclusiveness resembling a set of Chinese boxes that are defined by specific and limited sets of markers, agreed upon historically as the primary criteria for membership in ethnic groupings or sub-groupings.

The nesting quality is similar to that of a social distance scale in which the greater the number of diacritical markers, the closer one gets to a particular person and/or his kin group. It differs from a social distance scale because ethnicity is an historical lumping of sets of diacritics at varying distances outward from the person. Each of these lumpings acts as a potential boundary or nameable grouping that can be identified in ethnic terms. It is similar to a social distance scale, however, in that the number of diacritics decreases inversely with the scale of inclusiveness.

This means that some markers or diacritics include large masses of people, others refer to much smaller groupings. Because we all carry around many of these, it is clear that ethnicity is not only or even primarily an entity so much as a process set off by the relevance of markers in creating significant we/they dichotomies under particular conditions of time, place and situation. Specific markers are well known. Physical appearance, name, language, history, religion, citizenship, clanship and inherited occupational statuses are just a few that are widely selected as indicators.

Situational triggers are most commonly seen as changeable. Thus, a person can be Italian in Houston and Texan when he visits New York, an American in Paris and "one of our own" when he returns to ancestral haunts in Italy. But there are more subtle we/they devices. In the 1960s many Americans referred to themselves as "Blacks", a term previously thought of as derogatory. But this ethnized the Black/White dichotomy, making White ethnic distinctions irrelevant and racial distinctions uppermost as diacritics of we/they division. More recently, this has changed to "African-American", reflecting less racial and more descent-based we/they differences in which a person's ancestry within a named group (Scotch, Irish, Polish, Jewish, etc.) is emphasized. This seems more in tune with the times.



Given what is happening in many parts of the world in terms of ethnic nationalism, it is important to ask whether and to what extent ethnicity is linked to the origins and development of the centralized state as an emergent form of polity in human social evolution. Work on the origins and emergence of centralized states in various parts of the world indicates very clearly that the state is and always has been an adaptation which includes the capacity to incorporate multiethnic parties under one sovereign authority. This allowed for a quantum leap in power so dramatic that it was either emulated by surrounding societies or they were absorbed into states forming in their own regions.

This does not mean there were no uniethnic state systems. A few emerged, especially on isolated islands like Hawaii or Fiji, and an even smaller number evolved institutions for rapid assimilation. Thus, the Inca split up conquered ethnic units and spread them about the kingdom so that they would soon be absorbed in Inca culture and society. But these are exceptions. Most early states follow the example of Hammurabi's experiments. That is to say they developed a set of "universal" rules, possibly a state religion, duties to the state, especially military service, and the provision of revenues through taxes and tributes. If these few state-wide obligations were met, then early state subpopulations could carry on their own ancestral cultures, assimilating slowly over the generations and diffusing some of their own culture to an emerging state-based culture, if the latter remained stable enough to evolve its own synthesis. The situation is not that different today, although there is a tiny fraction of the number of states that once existed. Thus, Myron Weiner at MIT has measured multiethnicity and statehood in the 1980s on a world sample of 132 states. He finds that only nine percent of the sample can be described as uniethnic.

It is the "universalism" of state culture that is one of its most important contributions to human evolution. Given the particular ethnic units within a state, the state itself became a fountain for the production of panethnic rules, regulations, laws, obligations and even religious beliefs and, ultimately, of science. The units themselves are, remember, processual as well as being identifiable entities that do not shift. And this quality means that they can merge and emerge under new identities as time goes on. The state institutions, however, play this enormously important function, that of serving as the basis for universal laws, rules, knowledge-claiming and beliefs, especially religious ones. These qualities, linked to the state, go ultimately beyond it and claim a common universal membership under a universal God of all humankind. In Europe the ultimate intellectual manifestation of this, after claims by Christianity of being a "catholic", i.e. universal religion, is the Enlightenment. In effect, an ideology emerged in which universal principles of action, morality, law, politics and personal behaviour all point to a common universal form of understanding. Without the state such universal claims of belief, morality, law, etc., are impossible on a species-wide basis. With the state its emergence becomes inevitable. The state, therefore, is the font of multiethnic order, of universal rules and authority derived from religious concepts and theology that are the source of legitimacy for pan-ethnic order under supra-ethnic authority.



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It is one of the ironies of history that just as one of the main threads of universalism from statehood developed in Europe, so too did its opposite, that of ethnic particularism. The threads of this theme have always been present in multiethnic states. In Europe, however, they gained much force from the industrial revolution and the growth of modern nation states under the intellectual banners of Cultural Darwinism. Writers in central Europe, especially the much segmented German-speaking areas, began as early as the late 18th century to argue that ethnicity must be expressed in political terms as ethnic or national states. This development, it was argued, is the only way to protect and further the particularistic adaptation of a culture against its mongrelization in a "cosmopolitan" state. Each culture and its deep-rootedness in a territory is humanity's differential experimenting in adaptation. The state fosters this, protects it and helps each culture-as-state compete in a Hobbesian interstate jungle for survival and dominance over others so that in the end humankind will take on the culture of the most adaptive, most progressive traditions of the world's most superior people. One of the justifications for colonialism was thus the competition amongst European ethnic groupings for enforced diffusion of their culture to the "inferior" peoples of the Third World.

Unfortunately, this was/is one of the most misguided ideas ever developed in Europe. Human evolution, moving towards the dominance of the state as a political formation, discovered the utility of multiethnic society. European societies rejected the facts of evolution in favour of the myth of the ethnic state. This error is still helping to guide human affairs in many parts of the world where some notions of ethnic cleansing or linguistic survival through legal protection and the limiting of multicultural rights have influenced public policy.

The paper ends by suggesting and briefly describing more recent trends that are acting to unite these conflicting ideologies. On the one hand, the centralized, sovereign state has passed its zenith of autonomous power and authority. The 20th century has seen an acceleration of international agreements, especially in the field of human rights, in which sovereign states have signed away some of their power. From 1930 to 1980 there have been over 30 declarations of human rights or particular aspects of them signed by groups of states. Other factors such as disease and refugees, as well as arms control, trade agreements and regional organizations, are linking states and weakening state sovereignty. Internally, similar processes are taking power from central governments and distributing both responsibilities and public interest and concern to more local-level governmental units. The state is thus being weakened from both above and below.

At the same time modern society is increasing its complex and alienating attributes. I call this the pressure to separate person and role. More and more we are asked to respond to demands at work, at play or at home, in terms of pre-set and often conflicting role expectations. The whole person as actor and engaged conscious carrier of roles and traditions seems to be disaggregating artificially in both the real world and in social science theories that explain human experience. Under this kind of stimulus, ethnicity is experiencing a revival because it unites the

person with an historic group experience that is much more holistic and satisfying than the alienating sets of expectations and role-activities demanded of him or her. Thus, ethnicity acts as a buffer to alienation. As long as it fulfils nature we can move forward towards a synthesis of older antagonisms between universalism and particularism, between universal rules of civil society and human rights on the one hand and the complexity and richness of ethnic adaptations on the other.

### **Calvin Goldscheider**

It is a common observation and a continuous research finding that there are significant racial and ethnic differences in patterns of social life. Even a casual glance at recent research highlights the importance of these factors in areas as diverse as marriage and childbearing, migration, aging, death, mental illness and politics, contraceptive usage and housing. These are not necessarily meaningful in their conjunction. The question, it seems to me, is not whether there are ethnic and racial differences but in what contexts these differences are sharpened or diminished. We have already noted in this conference several sources of complexity in studying the conceptual question. We know that ethnic/racial differences are variable over time as the distinctiveness of groups changes, as differences among them in some areas narrow or widen. We also know that the importance of this differentiation is relative to other characteristics of education or region and this, too, changes over time and may be more pronounced among some groups than others. Therefore, convergence in ethnic differences in some areas of social life does not necessarily imply convergence in all areas.

We have already discussed the wide range of groups included within broad ethnic and racial categories as distinct from immigrant origin. As mixed racial parentage becomes more common, the boundaries defining and delimiting racial and ethnic origins become fuzzy. Who is in and who is out of the group has also become variable over time, depending, in part, on how affiliation and group identification are defined. Boundaries among ethnic and racial groups and the varying definitions of them among research studies result in increasing difficulties in comparing the same group historically and among communities. One implication of these complexities and others is that it is very unlikely that one grand theory will provide a systematic explanation for the complex and changing linkages between ethnic and racial groups on the one hand and social life on the other. But I think we have examined enough evidence and we have developed enough theoretical frameworks to provide some guidelines and to address the central analytic question which is what are the contexts that reinforce ethnic and racial distinctiveness and which are most likely to minimize or reduce them. I want to list very briefly now some of those contexts. I want also to suggest some methodological questions and try to translate them into some issues of measurement.



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What are the theoretical guidelines? I'll just list them without elaborating. One is that there are social, historical and economic contexts that need to be considered, including ethnic ideologies and practices and changes in the nature of socio-economic opportunities. That's one context. Secondly, there is the role of the state and I disagree with Mr. Cohen and argue that, in fact, the role of the state has become much more powerful in setting up issues of entitlement and reinforcing some forms of ethnic expression and I will illustrate that a little bit later. Thus, the role of the state and its entitlement programs are critical. Thirdly, there are forms of discrimination, not only as issues of human rights but as issues of access to opportunities. These forms are changing and that, too, is an important element to take into account. Fourth, it is clear that there is an overlap for some of the groups of ethnicity, race and socio-economic status. Often that implies disadvantage and inequality but almost always that overlap indicates more intensive interaction within the ethnic and racial community than outside. Fifth, there is a need to look at the demographic context within which groups work. We tend to focus rather statically, and the issue, it seems to me, is the generational reproduction of groups and their contours, population, size and structure, and cohorts of succession. These are features that connect to marriage markets, child bearing, schooling and the socialization of the next generation. If we are interested not only in differentiation at a point in time but also generational continuities, then we have to study these broader issues of demography, including migration. Finally, a kind of theoretical reminder and one which I will come back to later is the question of institutions. Ethnic and racial institutions are critical in sustaining continuity. In the absence of discrimination or the absence of racial markers that distinguish groups in the context of ethnic convergence, social characteristics and access to opportunities, ethnic institutions become one of the major constraints on total assimilation of ethnic populations.

These guidelines, if you like, or these issues that need to be emphasized have a series of methodological implications about which I want to remind you. All of them move us beyond the focus on the individual as the unit of observation and analysis at one point in time to incorporate larger units over time within a dynamic framework.

The first methodological concern that I want to underline is the importance of the life course and its connection to family, kinship and ethnicity. Often when I mention the life course in ethnicity it appears somewhat odd since we often assume that ethnic categories are prescriptive or primordial, fixed at birth and constant throughout the life course. I think that view is distorting. The classification of persons into ethnic/race categories is a social construction that varies with who is categorizing, who gets categorized and when these categories are applied. Thus, for example, young adults living alone may be less likely to identify themselves ethnically, while families with young children may be more directly linked to ethnic communities through family networks, jobs, schools, friends and neighbourhoods. So the salience of ethnic identification may increase as families are formed, or as transitions that link the generations, such as marriage, death and child bearing, occur. It is clear that the boundaries dividing groups tend to be flexible and that people also shift between groups at points in the life cycle. Multiple social identities



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have emerged in modern pluralistic societies. The salience of any one identity varies with the context; in this connection, life course transitions are of special importance because of the link to family networks. The life course perspective reminds us that ethnic and racial classifications are variables, not constants, and it emphasizes intergenerational connections.

Life course transitions occur, as demographers are ready to point out, in a cohort context. Consider, for example, ethnic/racial variations in terms of the compositions of generations. For example, which cohorts include relatives and family available to be supportive in times of health care needs? This reflects the fertility and family history of the group, the history of migration, who lives near whom, revealing degrees of generational family access, the pattern of family structure and work. Other factors include the extent of divorce and remarriage. All of those cohort changes have changed the nature of how the life course fits within the broader changes in society. The cohort perspective, I submit, is of particular importance in studying ethnic and racial differentiation over the life course.

Now a related consideration in this rethinking of ethnicity is to examine the intensity of racial and ethnic affiliation. Too often our research energies have concentrated on measuring the classification and categorization of individuals without sufficient attention to identifying how intensive is the connection between the individual and the group. At times ethnic and racial categories don't capture the range of effects precisely because they are based on this static classification. They don't take into account the intensity of ethnic commitments and the variety of attachments within communities. We know generation status for some groups or foreign language usage for others is an obvious signal of greater ethnic intensity, but there is also the composition of neighbourhoods, participation in economic activities and ethnic enclaves of schools, housing and services.

Ethnic intensity is likely to be greater when the ethnic origins of the couple are the same, when ethnic family members live close to one another, when they attend the same schools or have similar jobs or leisure time activities, are married within their own group and are involved with the same political and social institutions. Examining the intensity reinforces the notion that ethnic/racial classifications should be treated not only with moveable boundaries over time but with varying involvements in the community over the life course. And it seems to me that we should study these connections and networks directly in terms of these broader community-based institutions.

The state, as a social-political institution, plays an important and increasing role in shaping the nature of pluralism and designing policies that often reduce or widen ethnic group differentiation. Entitlement systems encourage and reinforce ethnic political mobilization, and often become the basis for new forms of expressions of racial and ethnic interests. These policy variances often operate at the community level and should be linked to ethnic/racial factors at the individual, family and household levels. So we have life course, we have intensity, we have

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institutions to link up to these individual identities. And there is that middle level that connects the individual to the broad macro picture and that is the role of families and households. These issues address primarily the question of the units of observation and the connections between these macro levels of analysis: we need community-based information to link to our individual-based observations. These linkages help us focus on the intensity of ethnic connections, not only the classifications of ethnic groups.

Let me briefly outline a few kinds of interpretations and then turn to some measurement issues. There are three kinds of interpretations of the ethnic differences that one discovers. One is an emphasis on cultural differences which focuses our attention on the values and culture of groups, and within this perspective, ethnic differences are reduced through acculturation: becoming culturally similar to dominant groups or other groups in society through a variety of processes including reduction of ethnic cultural values, and the reduction in the use of a foreign language. A second set of explanations focuses the distinctiveness of ethnic groups on their social composition. This has a long and distinguished research history in the United States and many of the great contributors to the literature are in the audience. The argument is that ethnic and racial differences at the turn of the century, i.e. the racial issues of the Black minority, Hispanic and Asian groups or even White emigrant groups, are really a function of inequalities and disadvantaged socio-economic status of the group as a whole. Both these perspectives have been taken together as cultural or social class.

An alternative framework emphasises structural networks and the power of community and its institutions that reinforce ethnic and racial distinctiveness and identity. Networks of ethnic and racial communities may be extensive; they are tied into place of residence and families, and there are linked economic activities and enclaves. The key argument is that the collision of groups is based on these institutions and networks. The intensity of the community is facilitated by the intensity of ethnic and social networks. The greater the social networks and the more intensive the institutions, the greater the cohesion. In this perspective, the extent of ethnic ties to the labor market over the life course is critical and changing economic networks become important. In this context, ethnic and racial distinctiveness is not limited to unacculturated immigrant groups or to racial groups that have experienced discrimination and who are economically disadvantaged. Although these groups are likely to be distinctive, ethnic and racial differentiation is unlikely to be limited to them.

Let me turn very briefly to the analytical and measurement implications of this in the time I have left. We need to locate within our measurement system aspects of the community- and household-based measures of ethnicity and race. If we look at ethnicity as it emerges in the census, it is a new form of ethnicity, what I call "questionnaire ethnicity." It is the ethnicity that emerges in the questionnaires that we design, not a very good fit for what we really want to look at. I think we can do a lot better than that. I think that while there is room for improving the formulation of questions that we ask and there are always good arguments for asking more



questions, the major advances in the study of race and ethnic distinct differentiation will come from new forms of analysis, from data that we already have collected, and not primarily from refinement or additions to our surveys and censuses. With respect to the issue of ethnic and race differentiation, it is not only the adequacy of questions being included but the modelling that we use to tell us how to develop measures. I want to just identify three of them to help us understand how we can use the data that are available more creatively.

First and foremost, I want to focus on the issue of community. I have argued that examining the community context is critical. By exploiting the hierarchal nature of census information and the details available for small areas we should be able to construct theories of ethnic and racial measures at the community and household levels. These could be compared to each individual so that we could examine whether persons of Hispanic ancestry, living in households where all of the other members are Hispanic and areas of high Hispanic density are different than Hispanics in other contexts. So that is one thing, let's connect up these kinds of measures that we have.

Secondly, we should also look at other conceptual indicators. We do this in Third World countries but we hardly do it in the United States. We should look at the conceptual community effects, local market conditions, local policies that may shape and influence, the presence of other minorities within an area. All of these forms of data are available, not necessarily from the same source.

Therefore, I think we ought to look at issues of intensity as the third issue. We have issues of community, issues of policy and state indicators, and economic indicators at the conceptual level. Let us also look at issues of intensity, and I want to emphasize that while these come from various different data sources, we, as analysts, need to connect the data sources and not treat them only bureaucratically as part of group A or group B and never talk to one another. It seems to be clear that ethnic and racial differences are not going to go away at least for the next generation. Given the current rates of immigration, I think they will be around in my children's and maybe my grandchildren's generations or they'll become historians and study what happened in the past. It seems to me that the differences among groups are important enough to be studied in ways that we have studied other kinds of issues in social life and they are too important to be left to issues of categories and classification.

### **Wsevolod W. Isajiw**

What I have tried to do in my paper is to present a systematic approach to defining ethnicity, which means trying to work out a theoretical framework for the study of ethnicity. Essentially the paper consists of these parts. First, I review the different approaches to ethnicity which have appeared in the psychological and sociological literature in the past 20 years. Secondly, I define



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ethnicity. It can be seen from this definition that ethnicity is a broad concept that has implications for group and individual phenomena. Therefore, I subdivide ethnicity into the concepts of ethnic group and ethnic identity and I define each one of these. Third, I take the ethnic group concept and look at different types of ethnic groups. Then I take the ethnic identity concept and try to look for different forms or different types of ethnic identity. Last but not least, I try to deal with the issue of changing ethnicity and ethnicity in change.

I think it has to be kept in mind that ethnicity is a rather complex phenomenon. This has implications for both theoreticians and researchers. The task for the theoretician is to outline what the essential dimensions of this phenomenon are and to indicate the directions of possible variations and change. If researchers choose to study only one or a few aspects of the phenomenon in-depth, it is logically incumbent upon them to indicate how these selective aspects relate to the other aspects of the phenomenon. In the sociological literature of the past 20 years, the following four major approaches can be discerned. First, ethnicity has been conceived as a primordial phenomenon, secondly, as an epiphenomenon. Third, it has been conceived as a situational, and fourth, as a purely subjective phenomenon.

The first approach, ethnicity conceived as a primordial phenomenon, is perhaps the oldest and is also used in anthropological literature. It holds that ethnicity is something given, ascribed at birth. References include people like Geertz, Isaacs, Stack and others. On the other hand, the conception of ethnicity as an epiphenomenon, or as a situational or a subjective phenomenon emerged in contrast to the primordial approach. One of the most significant contemporary writings on ethnicity as an epiphenomenon has been Michael Hechter's approach to ethnicity as a consequence of the cultural division of labour within society, i.e. as a consequence of "internal colonialism". The situational approach has argued that ethnicity is a matter of rational choice in different circumstances. In other words, ethnicity is something that may be relevant in some situations but irrelevant in others. Here, particularly, the work of Daniel Bell and Michael Banton has been significant.

In my opinion, in the past 20 years, the subjective approach to ethnicity, which conceives ethnicity as a social-psychological reality, is the most interesting. There have been several schools of thought within this approach. The first is that of Fredrick Barth, an anthropologist who separated the notion of culture from ethnicity and defined ethnicity in psychological terms. He introduced the concept of ethnic boundaries, which I find useful and have built into my own definition. The second school of thought, known as symbolic ethnicity, is represented by Herbert Gans, among others. It argues that ethnicity is nothing more than practical values, that it is simply a symbolic mark which identifies people who are otherwise acculturated to the mainstream culture. This, he argues, is what ethnicity has become in the United States. The third school within the subjective approach is the most recent and perhaps the most interesting. This is the constructionist approach which emerged to some extent with the work of the French

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constructionists Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu. It argues that ethnicity is a construction that derives from daily life and which can be modified and changed as life goes on.

How do we define ethnicity? In 1974 I wrote an article in which I tried to review the definitions of ethnicity in existence at that time in sociological literature. I tried to develop my own definition of the concept of ethnic group according to certain logical criteria. I will base my discussion of the nature of ethnicity on this previous work but I will modify and expand a number of aspects in order to take into account developments in the past 20 years. The concept of ethnicity depends on the meaning of several other concepts, particularly that of ethnic group and ethnic identity. The concept of ethnic group, I would argue, is the most basic. "Ethnic group" is a collective phenomenon, while ethnic identity refers to ethnicity individually. "Ethnicity" itself is an abstract concept which makes reference to both. There are several dimensions, which I call the basic dimensions of ethnicity, either on the collective level as an ethnic group or on the individual level and I would argue that if the researcher is to measure ethnicity fully, he or she must find at least some indicators of all these dimensions. Thus, ethnicity can be said to have both an objective and a subjective dimension. The objective aspects are those which can be observed as institutions, organizations, including that of kinship and descent, and work and behaviour patterns of individuals. The subjective dimensions refer to attitudes, values, preconceptions whose meanings have to be interpreted in the context of the process of communication. Furthermore, notwithstanding some of the contemporary approaches, the point of departure for our understanding of the nature of ethnicity has to be the idea of distinct culture.

Culture is conceived here partially in the traditional sense of involving a total way of life. The total way of life, however, does not necessarily mean simply a set of distinct everyday customs although it may include these. Rather, it refers to a unique historical group experience. Culture is in essence the system of encoding such experience into a set of symbolic patterns. It does not matter how different the elements are from one culture to another. The distinct culture is a manifestation of the group's distinct historical experience. The emphasis on culture as the point of departure for our understanding of the nature of ethnicity is not intended to mean that members of an ethnic group must always share one and the same culture to the exclusion of any other. Rather, it is intended to mean that persons who include themselves in an ethnicity would have a relation to a group who either now or at some point in the past has shared a distinct culture.

Let us now define ethnic group itself. Ethnic group is a community-type grouping of people who share the same culture, or descendants of such people who may not share this culture but identify themselves with this ancestral group. The objective dimension of ethnic groups includes the presence of at least some community institutions or organizations, the fact of having descendants and ancestors as factors of cultural transmission and identity formation, and the fact that there is a script for cultural behaviour in the form of customs, rituals or preconceptions



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which provide the contents for culture and transmission and are manifested in either behaviour or recorded documents. The subjective dimension of ethnic groups refers to what Fredrick Barth has labelled the "ethnic boundaries." It is very important to note that these are sociological boundaries and refer to group inclusion and exclusion (us and them). Although Barth does not stress it, I place a lot of emphasis on this. If there is much misunderstanding in many of the papers on this subject, I think it derives from this problem, that is, that there are two types of ethnic boundaries, those from within the group, the internal ethnic boundaries, and those from outside the group, the external ethnic boundaries. In many ways the dynamics of interethnic relations depend on the relationship between these two boundaries. Internal boundaries define the area of self-inclusion in the group. They overlap with the process of self-identity. They articulate with the feelings of sympathy and loyalty towards members of the same ethnic group. The external boundaries describe the parameter of exclusion of membership, the space of the outsider. In a multiethnic society in which members of different ethnic groups interact and compete with one another, the existence of internal boundaries will inevitably produce external boundaries. Persons will be identified by others as belonging to one or another ethnic group even if they do not actively share any cultural dimensions with that ethnic group as long as a link to their ancestors can be made. Identification by others, in turn, usually stimulates self-identification and it conditions new forms of social organizations. Hence, ethnicity is a matter of double boundaries, a boundary from within maintained by the socialization process, and a boundary from without established by the process of intergroup relations.

It is in terms of the relationship between these two boundaries that differences between ethnicity in Canada and, for example, the United States can be most fruitfully compared. I would suggest that the basic difference lies in the external boundaries. It is not so much a matter of faster or slower assimilation, melting pot or whatever; most significantly, it is the matter of how the various ethnic groups are perceived and identified in the two societies and especially how they are perceived and identified by the power-holding, policy-making and influence-wielding bodies of the two societies. The external ethnic boundaries will be reflected in the reasons for, and rationale behind, specific immigration policies, cultural policies of the state and the like. The role of the state is absolutely important in defining the boundaries.

The external ethnic boundaries are also the source of racial distinctions. Indeed, they are a source of "race" as a group phenomenon. Race is not a question of internal boundaries; race is a question of external boundaries. This is how a person or a group of persons is defined from outside by outsiders. As a social phenomenon, race is a response to external categorization and exclusion and whatever internal dynamics race generates, they are always a response to external exclusion rather than to internal identity-generated forces. The latter, that is internal identity-generating forces, are ethnicity-formation forces. External boundaries tend to activate or reinforce internal boundaries but the reverse is also true. The case of the Afro-American history in the past century shows that genuine internal boundaries were not formed until the Black



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movement reached for the roots of American Black culture in Africa and rediscovered its own cultural patterns and values in American society. Only then did it start to delineate internal boundaries which is ethnicity rather than race.

External boundaries, however, are an important source of political mobilization and the unity which this brings about. But this unity should not be confused with the one generated by the internal boundaries. Hence, rather than ethnicity, external boundaries are the significant source of pan-ethnicity, as can be seen in the case of Afro-Americans and the Caribbeans who join together in common political causes.

With respect to the question of ethnic identity, listening to the various uses of census and census questions, I was struck, in particular, by the United Kingdom census which places a heavy emphasis on race. It seems to me that it is trying to enforce the external boundaries given by the dominant group. Although this is done in the name of combatting discrimination and prejudice, it, in effect, builds a factor of prejudice.

It is important to look at the types of ethnicity, the types of ethnic groups and the types of ethnic identity. We should not confuse the different types of ethnic groups with all ethnicity. The particular lines of confusion in the past have been, for example, the inability to handle primary and secondary ethnicity. Primary ethnic groups are the Germans in Germany, French in France, English in England, etc. These are those ethnic groups whose culture developed in the same place where the group exists today. Examples of secondary ethnic groups are the French in Canada and the Germans in Canada. They exist when a culture is transplanted or when an identity has been brought over by an immigrant group. It is important to remember that in that sense both are ethnic groups. Secondary ethnicities develop into primary ethnicities over time. For instance, American ethnicity has been slowly emerging out of other secondary ethnicities. Canadian primary ethnicity is a little slower to emerge. Historically, primary ethnicities develop over longer periods of time.

Another distinction I make is between folk-community type of ethnic groups and the nationality community type. Here the difference between folk and nationality is in the degree of self-awareness and self-consciousness. A nationality community which is highly self-aware and which has a territorial claim can become a nation or a state. A state, therefore, is a self-aware ethnic group that has a territorial jurisdiction, or a number of ethnic groups with varying degrees of self awareness within the same territorial jurisdiction. Finally, young secondary ethnic groups are those composed of recent immigrants or those who have been in the country for only one or two generations, whereas old ethnic groups are generally three or more generations.

Finally, different types of ethnic identity as a subjective individual phenomenon depend on the variations of external and internal components of ethnic identity. One can distinguish ritualistic ethnic identity, ideological ethnic identity, rebelling ethnic identity, ethnic rediscoveries, etc.

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Another typology is single and multiple identities. There are several types of multiple identities, many of which are hyphenated, such as Italian-Canadian, Hispanic-American, etc.

Last, but not least, we must address the question of changing ethnicity. Ethnicity is a changing phenomenon. However, I would not say that it is in complete flux. I think that the flux is, in many ways, predictable and that it is the function of sociologists and researchers to study precisely how it is predictable. The objective and the subjective aspects of ethnicity should be assessed in terms of how each one changes. It should be remembered that the objective aspects are often subjective aspects made visible through the usual sociological process of objectification. In turn, the subjective aspects are meaningful reactions to the objective facts. The dividing line between the objective and the subjective is not that clear-cut. It is important to study the dynamics of ethnic identity over generations. This is why in studying ethnicity and change you must study generations.

Let me just end with this: to research any phenomenon one has to find empirical indicators of it. If the research is to be thorough, the indicators must test as many aspects as possible of the phenomenon being studied. This does not mean the maximum number of indicators is necessary for a full study of the phenomenon; on the contrary, it is usually desirable to have a minimum number of indicators. However, it is imperative that the minimum number of indicators be such that they do not exclude any of the essential aspects of the phenomenon. If one or a few indicators are unable to capture the nature of the phenomenon, then it is logically imperative that more indicators be used. Sometimes a battery of indicators may be necessary. The exact number of indicators should not be chosen either arbitrarily or on purely theoretical or political grounds. They should be selected as a conclusion of a thorough and empirical study. The study should include a great variety of indicators and reduce the number to the minimum set only as a consequence of empirical testing.

### **4.3 Discussant's Remarks**

#### **John de Vries**

The three papers presented in this sessions form a neat continuum. Cohen's paper gives a broad vision of ethnicity from the perspectives of history and geography: history going back to the earliest eras, geographically beyond the traditional boundaries of Western civilization. It represents a "macro" approach in several meanings of that term. Goldscheider's contribution shifts focus to a sociological and demographic perspective, with emphasis on families and households. We could call this a "meso" approach. Isajiw's paper moves us even further into sociological and social-psychological orientations with his discussion of ethnic identity as it relates to the formation of ethnic groups.

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From their own perspectives, all of the presenters showed that ethnicity is a multilevel phenomenon which operates at the macro-, meso- and micro-level. It is also multifaceted and probably not measurable by means of a single indicator.

Several themes were identified in these presentations. The first is the theoretical bases for the measurement of ethnicity, especially the conceptual definitions. While not mentioned by the presenters, a very useful monograph on definitions of ethnicity has been written by the COCTA group (Committee on Conceptual and Terminological Analysis) (R. Jackson 1986).

The second point that was raised is the nature of boundaries in the sociological, not geographic, sense. We need to know how to define and measure the boundaries within which, and without which, ethnic groups define and maintain themselves.

Furthermore, there is a need to determine whether there is, or is not, a distinct difference between the concepts of "race" and "ethnicity."

The nature of ethnicity at the micro- and macro-level was raised in all the presentations in this session. Does one (as Isajiw did) first define the ethnic group and then define ethnicity as an attribute of group membership, or is the obverse sequence more appropriate? In addition, the presenters mentioned the linkages between manifest ethnicity and context.

Another issue that was discussed is the role of the state and of state ideology in creating, shaping and maintaining ethnicity. That raises the problem of states, such as Greece, which officially deny the existence of ethnic minorities in their population; in this connection we should note the opposing views of Cohen and various other sources.

Finally, two of the papers touched on the viability, or lack thereof, of multiple identities. Isajiw argues that one could have multiple ethnic identities, whereas Goldscheider asserts that one could have multiple ancestries but not multiple identities.

### **4.4 Floor Discussion**

A lively discussion followed the three presentations on the meanings and dimensions of ethnicity. One of the first issues to be raised was the role and future of the modern state. Current political events in Africa, Eastern and Western Europe and North America were discussed in terms of the changing role of the state and its effect on the extent to which ethnic groups may, or will, mobilize.

Several participants dealt with the issue of the intensity of ethnicity which had been addressed in some of the presentations. Attendees wondered whether the intensity of ethnic identification



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varies according to social, political and economic conditions. Goldscheider argued that such conditions are essentially of an institutional nature, in particular political and economic.

Participants then debated the related issue of whether or not one should, or could, measure ethnic intensity in a population census. It was agreed that intensity should be measured in some fashion, but no consensus was reached on how that could be achieved. Reference was made to the Breton et al. study of ethnic identity and equality in a metropolis (Toronto), in which ethnic identity and its intensity were measured by means of a sample survey. The results of this survey were then linked with other measures of ethnicity.

Another strand running through the discussion involved the contrasts between ancestry and ethnic identity. There was general agreement that these two concepts are not identical and cannot be measured by means of a single question. Furthermore, in either of these dimensions multiple responses are legitimate and should be accommodated. Several commentators suggested that current census questions confuse the two dimensions. In addition, there was concern about possible confusion between multiple ancestries and multiple identities. Goldscheider suggested that "... if the objective is to get an ancestry question, then .... you should ask very clearly something that addresses an ancestry question which [has] multiple ancestries as a possible response ...." Isajiw argued that the census should measure objective as well as subjective aspects of ethnicity by means of three indicators: ancestry, self-identification and generation.

## ***5. Impact of Data Needs***

### **5.1 Introduction**

Following the presentations and discussions on National Experiences in the Measurement Of Ethnicity and the session on the Meaning and Dimensions of Ethnicity, the conference turned to the discussion of data needs: how they are determined and what their impact is on the design of ethnic, race or ancestry questions in national censuses. The purpose of the session was to explore the primary legislative, program, research and community needs for ethnicity data in the represented countries and agencies and to examine how the census could attempt to meet those needs. The session included three presentations as well as seven working groups on the subject of the impact of data needs. The following section provides the highlights of this session. The corresponding papers are included in Part 2 of these proceedings.

The presentations were made by Gustave Goldmann (Statistics Canada), Jorge del Pinal (United States Bureau of the Census) and Madelaine Gagné (Québec Ministry of Cultural Communities and Immigration). Mr. Goldmann began by outlining the legislative context of the Canadian situation. He then described some key characteristics of Canadian society that bear on the need for ethnic and ancestry data. He devoted a major section of his presentation to the consultations that took place during the development of 1991 Census, the uses that are made of ethnicity data, the major users and the mechanisms for client interaction with Statistics Canada and for dissemination of the data. He concluded by raising some challenging issues for the audience.

Mr. del Pinal's presentation began with current definitions of "ethnicity" and then went on to discuss the three questions in the U.S. census: race, Hispanic origin and ancestry. The rest of the presentation dealt with factors that affect the framing of the questions (legislation, statistical directives and others) and with the uses of the data by the private and public sectors.

In a detailed discussion of the evolution of the Québec government cultural and immigration institutions, Mme Gagné's described the need for and utilization of ethnic data in Québec.

Following the presentations conference participants were divided into seven working groups to further explore issues of data needs. The working group reports are also summarized in this section. Juanita Lott chaired this session on data needs.

### **5.2 Summary of Presentations**

#### **Gustave J. Goldmann**

Canada has a long history of collecting data on ethnic origin. During the session on national experiences you were given a quick tour of the development of the question, as well as the

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methods of data collection used in previous censuses. At this time I intend to outline: what the data needs are and how they were established, since this is a fairly important part of this whole process; who some of the major users of the data are; and what the issues are that need to be addressed from our perspective. The following extract from the *Statistics Act* will set the context for this discussion.

.... to collect, compile, analyse, abstract and publish statistical information relating to the commercial, industrial, financial, social, economic and general activities and condition of the people.

The terms *condition of the people* and *social activities* are particularly germane to this discussion since they directly relate to ethnicity, race, language, religion and other cultural characteristics.

The key to understanding the importance of ethnicity in Canada lies in the social, political and cultural context. First, Canada is in policy and practice a multicultural society. Throughout the country programs have been set up to encourage and support ethnic communities in promoting and preserving their distinctive cultural heritages. These programs include the funding of cultural and educational activities.

Second, Canadians are at present involved in a process of constitutional reform. The current debates focus not only on political boundaries and powers but also on the rights of individuals to express and enjoy their cultural heritage. This applies equally to recent and long established immigrant populations.

Third, the relationship between the aboriginal population and the various levels of government is being redefined. Fourth, immigration is a primary source of population growth in Canada. With increased immigration the ethnic composition of Canadian society will undoubtedly change. Finally, there is considerable interest in the preservation of heritage languages, a point which was officially recognized in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

Data on ethnicity serve to identify subgroups of the population and are used as cross-classification variables in the examination and analysis of many of the socio-economic and demographic trends. The following list, which is by no means exhaustive, serves to illustrate some of the areas of study that rely on these data:

- demographic trends
- employment practices and opportunities
- income distributions
- educational levels
- migration patterns and trends
- family composition and structure



- social support networks
- health conditions.

In addition, there is a legislative imperative for collecting these data. It is generally accepted and understood that statistical information supports the development, implementation and monitoring of public policy and legislation. Data on ethnicity are required, either directly or indirectly, to support the Constitution Act (1982), the Employment Equity Act (1986) and the Multiculturalism Act (1988). The exact nature of the interaction between the data and the legislation is covered in the accompanying paper.

However, I don't mean to suggest that data on ethnic origin are collected only because they are legally or constitutionally required. Data on ethnicity serve purposes beyond legislative support. For example, ethnic community organizations use these data for strategic and operational planning as well as in lobbying governments at various levels. There is a network of ethnic media serving the communities. Cultural activities such as religious and ethnic festivals abound. Many communities operate either full-time or afternoon schools to teach their youth their customs and languages. The final point, which should not be minimized, is an example of an industry that uses data on ethnicity to define its markets and products. Suppliers, manufacturers and distributors of food products need to know more about the size and composition of ethnic communities in order to satisfy their needs for special foods. There is also a growing number of ethnic restaurants in almost every major city in Canada.

Clients and data users interact with Statistics Canada and make their needs known. Some express their needs and views by responding to consultations initiated by Statistics Canada. Others make unsolicited representation, either through umbrella organizations or through formal mechanisms such as parliamentary standing committees. The media have also been used as a public forum for representation.

Ethnicity figures prominently in requests for census data. In the 1981 Census it was the fourth most requested variable. In the 1986 Census 20 percent of all requests included data on ethnicity. The distribution of the 1986 requests by client group shows that 57 percent of the requests were submitted by clients in the public sector (federal, provincial and municipal/regional), 23 percent were submitted by post-secondary academic institutions and 20 percent were from the private sector, including the media, ethnic organizations, special interest groups, community organizations and private individuals.

Data on ethnicity are also collected on a number of other Statistics Canada surveys. The General Social Survey included a question on ethnic origin on all but the most recent cycle. The labour market activity survey, last conducted in January of 1991, included a question on ethnicity. The literacy survey conducted in October of 1989, the survey of smoking patterns conducted in March of 1990, the national alcohol and drug survey conducted in March of 1989

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and the follow-up of the 1986 graduate survey conducted in March of 1991 all asked questions on ethnic origin. It is obvious from this that the data are used for many applications beyond mere counts.

The process of developing questions for the census, which may be referred to as the question development cycle, includes a number of steps. It begins with an assessment of the formal and informal program requirements, followed by consultations with interest groups, with clients of the data and with formal advisory committees. Previous collections are evaluated to determine their effectiveness in achieving the desired results. Extensive questionnaire testing and development is conducted, as described by Pamela White during the presentation on national experiences. The final stage involves submitting the content to Cabinet for formal approval. The cycle described above is generic and, with the exception of the final step, applies to any collection activity. It should be noted, however, that unlike the United Kingdom, census questions are not debated on the floor of the House in Canada. They go to Cabinet only, not to the full House of Commons.

Although the process described above appears to be very ordered and straightforward, this is not always the case. Many trade-offs must be considered. For instance, client needs must be balanced against the operational reality of collecting the data. Space constraints must be considered along with the limits to respondent tolerance. The complexity of a topic must be balanced against the method of enumeration.

It is the goal of all national statistical agencies to collect high quality data, minimize respondent burden and publish results in a timely fashion. In the case of ethnicity data, these goals are particularly difficult to achieve because it is an emotional topic which is subjective and open to interpretation, both during collection and analysis.

Social scientists are faced with a number of challenges and issues which need to be addressed. First, the definitions to be applied and the context. For instance, what exactly is meant by ancestry, identity and race and which of these three distinct concepts is applicable in a given situation? Second, the level of detail of data classification systems and their stability over time. The third point, continuity, has been the focus of significant debate which has not been resolved and will continue for many years. The fourth challenge, the sensitivity of the data, can almost be considered an anti-need. There have been instances when the publication of justice and income statistics by ethnic group has raised sensitivities. The final challenge in this list is the need for small area data and data for small populations.

To conclude, the questions which are listed below cover some of the basic issues which must be addressed by national statistical agencies if we are to successfully collect data on ethnicity:

What are the best vehicles for collecting these data?

How do we avoid creating stereotypes?  
How do we deal with multiple ethnicities?  
Should we collect data on ancestry?  
... or should we collect data on identity?  
... or should we collect data on race?

These questions are a subset of those with which we will be dealing in the working groups sessions. We should also consider how do we as statistical agencies maintain our neutrality and avoid accusations of bias.

### **Jorge del Pinal and Susan J. Lapham**

Since we were discussing ethnicity, I reviewed the literature to find a definition that seems to fit what we at the Census Bureau do. This is Lowry's definition: "Ethnicity...is the social identity which derives from belonging to a group whose members share a common race, religion, language or national origin." The key factor here is that it's a social identity that derives from belonging to a group whose members share a common race, religion, language or national origin.

Petersen also notes that a group must have cohesiveness. "'Belonging' can arise during socialization or by being identified as a member of that group by others which stimulates 'self-identification'." Professor Isajiw comes to the rescue by answering the question, "How does the ethnic, social identity evolve?". I am one of those people that arrived in the United States and was handed an ethnic identity. I was told I was Latin. I never even took Latin in school so I am not sure how they determined that. However, belonging to a group can arise through socialization. Obviously in my case, my parents didn't tell me I was Latin, so I didn't get my identity that way. How about if you are identified by others as a member of a group which stimulates self identification? I think that is more clearly what happened in my case.

In the United States census, as noted in the paper by McKenney and Cresce, there are three main identifiers of ethnicity: a race question, an Hispanic origin question and an ancestry question. We need all three for describing the ethnic diversity of the United States. Basically, Federal legislation specifies the need for collecting data on certain groups (for example, Civil Rights Act of 1964, Voting Rights Act of 1965, Civil Rights Act of 1968, Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972 and the Older Americans Act of 1965). Federal Policy Statistical Directive No. 15, issued by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), outlines the race and ethnic data Federal agencies should collect. Race groups are defined as: American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian and Pacific Islander, Black and White. Ethnicity is of Hispanic origin or not of Hispanic origin. The directive defined the minimum number of categories, but if two questions are not feasible, then one question with American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian or



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Pacific Islander, Black not of Hispanic origin, Hispanic and White not of Hispanic origin is required.

Federal agencies are not restricted to the minimum groups but they have to be able to reduce it back to these categories. Basically, the Census Bureau doesn't have total liberty and data users scrutinize what we do. Several federal agencies use the minimum definition: one is Social Security Administration and the second is the Centers for Disease Control. Both use only five categories. Why isn't there a lot of emotion about that? Isn't Social Security important, aren't we interested in the elderly, aren't we interested in disease? Why can we get away with five groups for disease? They are looking at age and some very significant things. Well, of course, there are several articles out there that describe why the census categories are controversial but let's just go over some of the reasons quickly. Federal, State and local governments use ethnic data to award federal contracts; to monitor admissions to universities, employment and promotion practices, to keep track of availability of housing and public accommodations and access to public facilities; and to disburse funds. There is a lot of pecuniary interest, as well as political power, attached to the collection of ethnic data in the census. That is why ethnic data are controversial and carefully scrutinized.

One aspect that gets lost in the debate is that there are private uses for ethnic data. One of the biases in the discussion we've heard from the academic circles arises from their interest in using the ethnic data for research. Another use for ethnic data is marketing. There is a very active Hispanic media, for example, in the United States; and these firms have to charge advertising dollars. How do they go about saying how much they should receive for their audience share? Well, they realized quickly that you need something with some official cachet in order to go to a business and say, "You owe me a hundred thousand dollars a minute because I am delivering to an audience of 5.5 million people in the Los Angeles area and here are the census statistics to prove it".

Another issue is ethnic pride. The reason people want the data is because they have pride in their ethnic background. It's not that they've been traditionally discriminated against. They just want a total count of, for example, Germans and the characteristics of the group, such as their educational levels. In our paper we give examples of groups that want to be in the census, not because they've been discriminated against necessarily but because they would like to see the data.

So the other aspect is ethnic politics. For example, there are two very good articles, one by Lowry and one by Choldin, that discuss this subject. Lowry describes the issues which arose with the change of the race question in 1990. Choldin notes how Hispanic origin came to be a separate question. There are two things I want to bring up about those articles. First, as Choldin says, social statistics should reflect the social-political environment; and second, interaction with data users will help gain their support for the census which perhaps results in

a better census. Lowry also points out in his paper that there is a certain "social validation" in having your group on the census form. It's a recognition that your group is an important contributor to the national situation, so for that reason alone you might want your group to appear on the census.

There are many similarities between the Canadian and United States Censuses: we had local public meetings, Census advisory committees, interagency working groups, a Federal agency council, special conferences and interaction with subject matter specialists prior to the census. We consulted with federal agencies and we held special conferences and we received input. Stan Lieberman in his keynote address discussed attending one of the ethnic conferences in which he thoroughly stepped into the "social reality" and controversy surrounding the collection of ethnic data. Here are some of the issues arising from these contacts: conceptual issues such as "fuzzy group boundaries"; overlapping concepts (that is, race, Hispanic origin and ancestry); other issues that are multiple indicators of ethnicity; and ethnicity group equity. For example, should we use self identification or some more objective measure of ethnicity such as place of birth? Which groups should appear in the census questionnaire? One solution may be to have one question with two parts: one limited mutually inclusive and exhaustive groups deemed to be of social and policy relevance and an open-ended question eliciting self-expressing of ethnic background. Our paper has more details about how such a question might be created.

### **Madeleine Gagné**

Unlike the experts you heard yesterday and this morning, I am speaking to you as a government manager, which means that I have to make sure that the tools required to study the reality of cultural communities are available, both for myself and for my partners.

I will first examine the process of awareness that has taken place in Quebec in the last 10 years in terms of political initiatives and programs. I will then deal with the use of identification criteria and the necessity for a flexible definition to reflect a complex reality, bearing in mind that there are no miracle solutions. It must be stressed that an instrument that is designed for collecting and analysing data can and must change over time as needs and circumstances change. I will then show how the current emphasis on gaining a better understanding of the reality of cultural communities requires instruments that are continually better adapted to these needs. Finally, I will present my own analysis of our current needs regarding census data.

Quebec has only recently become aware of the reality of immigration by cultural communities into the province. The Department of Immigration was established 25 years ago in 1968, but it was only very recently that Quebec's francophone institutions started to become aware of the pluralist reality. Since it was established, the Department has become an important source of technical and professional support for cultural communities, but it was not until the 1980s that



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Quebeckers' awareness of the cultural communities in their midst began to gain momentum and was reflected in political initiatives and in private and public institutions. Quebeckers began to appreciate the importance of cultural communities, and the need to ensure their full participation in the life of the province. They also recognized the need to develop harmonious relations between communities and to adapt the province's institutions accordingly. With these objectives in mind, the provincial government broadened the Department's mandate in 1981 to cover the reality of cultural communities and immigration.

**\*\*Section 4 of the act that established the Department of Cultural Communities and Immigration makes the Department responsible for the planning, co-ordination and implementation of government policies to promote the development of cultural communities and their full participation in Quebec society.\*\*** In particular, it is responsible for programs designed to maintain and develop original cultures and to ensure that the cultural communities exchange with, and draw closer to, the francophone community. By giving it these additional responsibilities, the government confirmed the role that the Department had always had. Through our efforts to expand this role, we have been able to increase our knowledge and develop instruments better adapted to current realities.

Another of the government's initiatives was to create a council of cultural communities and immigration in 1984. The council's responsibilities include advising the Minister, bringing to his attention all matters relating to cultural communities and immigration, obtaining opinions, and receiving and hearing requests and suggestions on all matters relating to cultural communities. In addition, the National Assembly (the Quebec legislature) adopted a declaration on ethnic and race relations in 1986, which underlines the government's commitment to equality and to the participation of all citizens in the development of Quebec society.

This political recognition of the development of relations between communities and the associated issues also produced tangible action. In 1981, the Government of Quebec produced its first action plan relating to cultural communities. Its objectives were to bring the majority and minority communities closer together and to eliminate all forms of discrimination and injustice. Emphasis was given to promoting equal employment opportunities within the provincial government.

Further equal employment opportunity programs were introduced in the 1980s, and this process is still continuing today. Contractual obligations were placed on companies doing business with the provincial government. An equal employment opportunity program was introduced within the provincial public service and as of 1990, a 12 percent annual hiring rate requirement was in place for members of cultural communities. The departments of Health and Social Services, Education, Higher Education and Science, Cultural Affairs, and Public Security all voluntarily introduced equal employment opportunity programs, as did the Montreal Urban Community and the City of Montreal. These initiatives also led to the introduction of service access programs. The Department of Health and Social Services developed an action plan to make services more



accessible to cultural communities by eliminating linguistic and cultural barriers. A number of proposals relating to cultural communities were made in 1990 and 1991. In light of the government's policy statement on immigration and integration, however, the changes that have taken place in the last 10 years are only a beginning. In addition, there is an associated committee of the National Assembly which is working on an action plan to translate the policy statement's objectives into tangible initiatives. This action plan involves 43 government departments and agencies in a process designed to co-ordinate the government's activities in this area and make institutions better adapted to the needs of cultural communities. It is therefore clear how important it is to have adequate information on cultural communities.

Let us now examine the question of identification criteria. The term "cultural community" naturally refers to immigrant populations, including the first generation and all succeeding generations. These populations can be identified using common quantifiable characteristics such as country of birth, mother tongue, language spoken at home, ethnic origin and religion. This initial definition is based on quantifiable characteristics and is restricted to ethnocultural variables that make it possible to identify specific populations on the basis of selected criteria. It is quickly apparent, however, that there are problems in applying this definition of cultural communities, because it uses more than one identification criterion. While each of the variables makes it possible to identify specific communities, none of them applies to every community.

The term "cultural community" clearly has a sociological aspect. A community is a social unit which can be identified by its institutions and representatives. This aspect of the community refers to its cultural characteristics, vitality, level of organization and organizational structures. It raises the question of belonging to the community and how communities are defined. Such a definition must contain both qualitative and quantitative elements related to the internal life of a community and its relations with others.

In a recent attempt to develop an instrument more appropriate to this complex reality, the Department produced profiles of 49 cultural communities containing statistical data on community size, immigration period, waves of immigration, age groups, sex, mother tongue, knowledge of English and French, level of schooling, activity status and occupation. These profiles are designed to characterize cultural communities on the basis of census data. In addition to census data, the profiles contain data relating more to qualitative information on community lifestyle, such as major celebrations, institutions, organizations and media and the main sources of information on the community. This work tool is designed primarily to make it easier for institutions to work with cultural communities, by providing them with an image of the communities that is based on both quantitative and qualitative elements.

We also need to develop and manage an up-to-date and fairly detailed historical database. This instrument would allow us to respond to operational needs more effectively and would make it easier to define our clients and their location and determine their needs. To develop such a

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database, we require census data which will allow us to examine the "chromosomes" of Quebec's population by breaking down the population using a number of ethnocultural variables that define communities, such as immigrant population, population by country of birth, mother tongue, language spoken at home, ethnic origin and religion. These data will be used in combination with analyses of the socio-demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the immigrant population and ethnocultural populations. We will then compare those data to data on the overall population, in order to conduct analyses and identify specific problems. This type of database is thus very important for transmitting information to our partners in the cultural communities or in other government departments.

This process is designed to give institutions the information they need to adapt their services to their clients, such as services provided under equal employment opportunity programs in accordance with how they are used and who is using them, either by the government itself, by the private sector through contractual obligations, or through initiatives such as that of the Montreal Urban Community. We must bear in mind, however, that the choices made will vary in accordance with the analyses. We must therefore ensure that we have all the information and data required to make reliable analyses. Accordingly, programs must be carefully defined so that as much information can be collected as possible.

Finally, I would like to make some recommendations regarding future needs for census data. In my opinion, all of the ethnocultural variables should be retained, including religion, which was eliminated in 1986 and then reintroduced in 1991. Our society needs the contributions of all cultural communities, and we therefore have to make every effort to understand their distinguishing characteristics. We must also divide the question on ethnic origin into two parts, in order to obtain information on ancestry and, in particular, on the feeling of belonging to the community. This information will later be useful as a direct indication of the respondent's feeling of being different. In the context of relations between communities, I feel it is essential to develop and test a question dealing with the feeling of belonging to the community.

In light of recent changes in immigration flows, it is essential to reintroduce a specific question dealing with parents' place of birth. Such a question was included in four previous censuses, the last occasion being in 1971. This type of question has always been used following major waves of immigration or after changes were observed in the composition of the immigrant flow in the preceding decade. I therefore feel that we are now justified in asking that a question on parents' place of birth be added to the next census. I also feel that the government should consider adding a direct question on belonging to a visible minority, to facilitate application of the employment equity program. We are very satisfied with the implementation exercise that was made possible by the cross-tabulation of variables, which has provided us with an effective instrument for applying the employment equity program. Statistics Canada should also reinstate the testing it conducted in 1988 to promote voluntary self-identification as a member of a visible minority, for the purposes of applying the *Employment Equity Act*.



I will conclude by asking you to remember that the needs of government managers are determined by specific policy and program objectives. Traditional census considerations must naturally be respected, but adjustments are also required to respond to changing circumstances and needs.

### **5.3 Working Group Discussions**

This section summarizes the discussions that took place in the working groups on the impact of data needs. It presents the highlights of the deliberations and the key points and recommendations that were made.

#### ***Issues***

The working groups were asked to address issues relating to the priority of data needs, feasibility of governmental agencies meeting various data needs, resolution of conflicts among data requirements and whether data on race/ethnicity reinforce stereotypes and divisiveness. All working groups were asked to discuss core questions (1-3); each working group was asked to deal with at least one of the specific supplementary questions (4-8).

The questions were provided to focus the discussions of the groups. A summary of the discussions appears below each question.

1. *What should be the primary legislative, program, research and community data needs? Is a question on race needed to meet these data needs? How should conflicts between legislative, research, community and program data needs be resolved?*

There was a consensus that constitutional and legislative data needs had to be given first priority because they identify and dictate the data needs on ethnicity. In addition, governments require the data to evaluate equity programs and policies by monitoring the status of groups in society. Needs for data change over time. There are also community, research, academia, and business needs; ethnic and other nonprofit groups need data.

No agreement was reached about the need for race data. Although the division tended to split along Canadian-United States lines, it was not universal. Some participants believed that the race question is not appropriate and results in divisiveness. Others argued that the question was needed to address issues of racism and discrimination. There was, however, general agreement that some type of data is needed to address these issues; the question is whether the traditional U.S. question on race should be used.



## *Impact of Data Needs*

### *2. How should ethnicity, race and ancestry and/or identity be defined?*

During the discussions there was no consensus on a single definition of ethnicity, race or ancestry. Participants agreed that while one can identify a number of dimensions, the definition of ethnicity may depend on the context within which it is used. It was stressed that any definition of ethnicity should be transportable across data sources, that is, it should be consistently employed in data sources such as censuses, surveys and administrative records. Inconsistent definitions of ethnicity in censuses and surveys on the one hand, and administrative record systems on the other, result in numerator-denominator problems when these two sources of data are combined.

It was agreed that there is a need to collect data on components of ethnicity such as race, Hispanic origin, ancestry and immigrant generation. However, concerns were raised about how to handle mixed group reporting in a race (or visible minority) question. There was some support for combining the race, Hispanic origin and ancestry questions in the U.S. census but there was no consensus on how it could be done. It was feared that combining questions would make the resulting question either too complex to be understood or so simplistic that it would not serve data needs.

### *3. Is the census an appropriate vehicle to collect data on ethnicity? What level of detail is appropriate for the classification of ethnic data? What should be the level of geographic disaggregation?*

Participants agreed that the census is an appropriate vehicle to collect data on ethnicity. For numerically small groups and small geographic areas, the census is the only instrument that can provide reliable data. Data are needed at the minimal level of geography such as a block, for building standard and special geographic areas. Special geographic areas would include neighborhoods, communities, and so on. Microdata to the census tract level are essential, but the quality of these data, especially for very small groups, can be a problem.

Nevertheless, it was noted that due to size limitations, census questionnaires do not provide adequate space or resources to probe ethnicity, ancestry or race. In addition, for some groups, recognition in census-taking is equated to social recognition and is a priority. However, questionnaire space is limited.

### *4. Should we (Statistical Agencies) meet all needs for data on ethnicity? How should we reconcile conflicting definitions? Are these data more suitably collected by the communities themselves?*

It was agreed that statistical agencies can not meet all the diverse data needs. Demands for space on the questionnaire and limited resources mean that all data needs cannot be met. On the other hand, communities are not able to collect the data themselves; the census is the only source of such information and survey sizes are too small to provide reliable data. On the other hand, universities and private entities have resources and capabilities of developing data to meet some of the research and business needs.

Some participants observed that statistical agencies should look at new methodology or new approaches for certain applications to obtain a broader array of data, different definitions or different concepts. It was also recommended that supplementary questions be added for certain areas to meet special data needs. Governments should consult extensively with data users to resolve competing data needs. The government also needs to consider the public interest in the resolution process; the legislative needs have to be considered first. It was pointed out that data are not currently equally accessible to all groups. Efforts should be made to improve the accessibility and education about the uses and limitations of the data.

5. *Does the collection of data on race/ethnicity reinforce stereotypes and divisiveness? If so, is there an alternative approach for meeting data needs?*

In general, the participants agreed that the collection of data on race/ethnicity does not reinforce stereotypes and divisiveness. This issue was discussed from the perspective of the collection of ethnic data as well as the uses and interpretation of the data. It was concluded that mere collection does not necessarily reinforce stereotypes. However, some of the uses and interpretations of the data could have a negative impact. It was noted that data collection may promote group identification. The development of a group identity may have negative or positive consequences. The group identified may feel stronger and compete with other groups, resulting in divisiveness. Participants recommended that more research be done in this area as social science literature has minimal systematic analysis regarding the collection of data and its impact on stereotypes and divisiveness.

6. *Who should be consulted to determine data needs? Should collection vehicles include questions for targeted groups?*

Statistical agencies should consult with the broadest possible range of data users. Greater consultations are needed with groups at the very earliest stage of planning of the census, and at subsequent critical stages of development.

It was agreed that there is a need to look at alternative approaches such as post censal surveys for obtaining information on targeted groups.

## *Impact of Data Needs*

### 7. *Is comparability over time more important than relevance at a given point in time?*

Participants agreed that most ethnic data users prefer comparability over time. However, analysts and academicians do recognize that ethnicity is dynamic and the questions must evolve in order to reflect changes in society.

### 8. *Is the issue of multiple ethnicities as mixed statistical classifications resolvable?*

In the United States, multiple responses tend to pose a problem, while in Canada, researchers and other users are becoming accustomed to multiple response data on ethnic origin. Multiple ethnicities are viewed as a positive feature of the data, providing additional information on respondents' ethnicity. Some data users request more data on the specific ethnicities.

## **5.4 Floor Discussion**

After the working group chairs presented a summary of the their group's discussion, Gustave Goldmann opened the session to comments from the floor. Participants raised the issue of consistency of definitions in data bases and the need for more communication and collaboration between data collection agencies. It was stressed that greater uniformity of definitions was needed to ensure analytical and conceptual consistency. This is especially important in cases where indicators or data come from very different sources such as the census and vital statistics or administrative records.

Lack of consistency of approach was cited in the collection of statistics on race in the United States. In recent years there has been a change in the classification of children of interracial couples. In the past they were categorized by the non-White parent but in the past year it has been by race of mother. In the census, however, analytical studies have shown that respondents tend to report these children according to the race of the father.

Another point that was mentioned was the need in any discussions about data to distinguish between what is collected, the method of coding the collected data and the published data.

The conference attendees also stressed the need for statistical agencies to bear in mind how the data are or can be used. The purposes for which the data are collected should be an important consideration for census planners and disseminators.

Some participants suggested that the political process can play a dynamic and influential role in the development of census questions. The collection and presentation of the data can have a significant effect on ethnic communities. They, in turn, can influence data development,



collection, tabulation and presentation. This process can be beneficial to statistical agencies, the academic community and the groups themselves. In this connection it was suggested that statistical agencies should ensure that there is adequate and open communication with different racial and ethnic groups through such mechanisms as briefs, other representations and focus groups.



## **6. *Socio-political Context***

### **6.1 Introduction**

The fourth session of the conference concentrated on how changes in the social and political environment affect the measurement of ethnicity. Speakers were asked to address such issues as the effect of the socio-political context on data collection activities, the impact of current world events and government policies on ethnic and racial classifications and the ways these factors may influence how respondents view and identify themselves. The following section presents the highlights of this session. The corresponding papers are included in Part 2 of these proceedings.

Presentations were given by Professors Leo Estrada and Audrey Kobayashi, both of whom provided interesting insights based on their professional and personal experiences. Mr. Estrada began by outlining the practical and political considerations in collecting data on race and ethnicity and he suggested that changes were needed in how the data are used, rather than in how they are collected. He continued by dealing with the social and psychological aspects of racial and ethnic definitions. His presentation concluded with a vision of the future in terms of the many and varied applications of ethnic data.

Ms. Kobayashi's presentation focused primarily on policies and political processes that underlie the development and uses of ethnic data in Canada. She also dealt with the theoretical and practical effects of data collection, classifications and presentations on Canadian ethnic communities and on their of inter- and intra-group relations.

Following the presentations conference participants were divided into working groups to further explore the issues raised during the presentations. The deliberations of the working groups and the plenary discussion which followed are summarized in this chapter.

### **6.2 Summary of Presentations**

#### **Leobardo F. Estrada**

It's an honor to be here among good company and colleagues and I am pleased to have the opportunity to make a presentation. I work in the area of race and ethnic statistics in the United States and have been working with, against, for and around the Census Bureau for some time. The ways in which the Census Bureau goes about doing things have always been of interest to me and so I wrote a paper about how changing government objectives affect the way in which the Census Bureau does its work.



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I begin by noting that there is a misconception that often arises among the populace of the United States that race and ethnicity data first appeared in the 1960s. I am not surprised by this because race and ethnic data are, in fact, aligned to a very important political movement and time in the United States. Actually race and ethnic data go quite far back; we probably would never have been able to establish ourselves as a country and ratified the U.S. constitution if racial differences, particularly between slaves and Whites, had not been compromised.

Asian groups appeared in the census when immigration issues and attitudes toward immigration were very strong in the United States. At that time we were trying to determine immigration policies and quotas. Hispanics, who were among the last of the groups to come to prominence, do so because of political pressure. The changes that the census has undergone with race and ethnicity reflect very important historical and political needs that the country has felt at different points in time.

As Choldin and Ira Lowry suggest, looking at the way in which questions appear in the census can be instructive in understanding race and ethnicity and other political forces which interact with the census. One of the things that the census propaganda will tell you is that there are different criteria for including items on the census. The national interest is the most important criterion. Clearly this is defined in terms of legislative mandates but in reality the national interest is more than that because it also has to do with the interpretation of public good.

We know that some questions appear on the census because they are required for small areas and this is, of course, a very clear cut case. There is also the issue of whether or not the data that are in the census are reliable and valid. At the time that I first became acquainted with the Census Bureau, a very important element of the work was that everything that was on the census could be validated by independent sources of data. This assumption has become less true in the last few years but reliability remains an important element of the criteria. And finally, there is the issue of historical continuity which also previously held a higher rank among the criteria.

It is important to note that all of these criteria are met by race and ethnicity data and that, as a result, we will continue to collect this information. But I like to argue that the way we are going to use the data, for policy decisions particularly, and how they are disseminated may undergo a change. Personally, I think race and ethnic data, like other demographic data, both inform the public debate and are now a target of that debate. In part it is due to the ascension of and increased dependency on data for decision-making in public circles and by public officials.

But there's also a debate on whether race and ethnicity should continue to hold a privileged status in U.S. society. Government doctrine and policy on race and ethnicity have changed very rapidly over time. It's important to understand that during this period of time race and ethnicity went from being a fairly passive and descriptive item to a proactive instrument to guide social

change. In my view, race and ethnicity data are not neutral and not innocuous because of the way people use the data. I've seen the data used for rational allocation of social services as well as for gerrymandering to dilute the voting power of minorities.

I deal quickly in my paper with my view of ethnicity because it is important to have some understanding of it before working with it. I talked about some of the internal definitions as well as the external ones. There's one definition I liked: Erik Erikson's. Erikson combines, in a very important way, the psychological aspects of self with the external dimensions of culture, history and society. It's a very useful and appealing way to approach these issues. He also uses ethnicity as an organizing system; one which provides direction and purpose and helps to organize a person's life and activities. This aspect helps explain why we can mobilize politically on the basis of ethnicity. It also gives a sense that ethnicity is not a fuzzy issue. It has a very solid core for which we can accept self-identification as a valid measure.

There are also external definitions of race and ethnicity. We know that external definitions (ethnic identity defined from outside) can play a very important role when they are negative and are in an ethnically stratified society. The interaction between the internal and the external identification is very complex but the Census Bureau must deal with it in a very oversimplified manner.

I point out that there are some other elements in the area of ethnicity that are of importance. I use Sherover-Marcuse's idea of "emancipatory consciousness" and Shapiro's idea of "individual liberation" as ways of explaining some very important roles ethnicity plays, the ways in which ethnicity can be used and the importance it represents to the ethnic population of the United States. Blacks, Hispanics, Asians and Pacific Islanders have mobilized in the United States on an ethnic basis and have raised claims of human rights, social equality and self-determination. It is important to understand this because they have images and identities based on an acceptance of what they are and a positive self-image of what they can do. This helps put race and ethnicity into an historical context which is very important.

I will focus mostly on issues of affirmative action. In the United States after World War II we were living in a great contradiction between the anti-racist rhetoric that we professed overseas and the enforced system of racial segregation that was practised. Both institutional and individual racism were pervasive and the idea of "separate, but equal", which became law in 1896 and continued to be law for 67 years, dominated all aspects of our lives. Data during these times were used mainly for description; they were of uneven quality and used largely to describe the population. Changes in segregation and discrimination began in the late 1940s and started to peak in the 1960s. When segregation was challenged, new institutions were developed and the data began to be used for advocacy. With the rising advocacy of minority groups came an increased need for data.



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Through an executive order that affected government and the defense industries, Roosevelt established the first anti-discrimination act in 1941. This increased militancy and the focus of the struggle moved beyond legal rights to the economic structure. Advocacy statistics were very important because through them segregated schooling, residential segregation and poverty conditions came to the forefront and to the consciousness of the population. From this came efforts to use race and ethnic information to set standards for affirmative action. Kennedy, through an executive order in 1961, affected all federal contractors; Johnson in 1965, through the Office of Federal Contract Compliance, affected anyone working with government grants. In 1964, the Voting Rights Act created the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission that deals with private industry as well as government. Hiring policies became an issue and the emphasis on a representative labor force began to intensify the demand for racial information. What we have to understand is that in a period of 25 years we in the United States went through a transition from actively maintaining racial segregation as a governmental policy to mandating a standard of restructuring racial representation. The data that were required for advocacy became critical. If you had the data, you could advocate; if you did not, then you could not challenge illegal action.

Most recently we've seen a new challenge to affirmative action. Charles Murray is a good example of someone who finds affirmative action a contradiction of the progressive trajectory of America towards a color-blind society. Walter Williams initially sought to establish equality of access but now he looks at this as parity in representation and argues against it. Thomas Sowell, one of a number of conservative economists, believes that we have abandoned race neutrality and color-blindness for a system based on allocation by membership in special racial/ethnic groups; he has concerns about that. Nathan Glazer believes that affirmative action represents an abandonment of the cause of individual claims to consideration on the basis of justice and equity to be replaced with concerns for the rights for publicly determined and delimited racial and ethnic groups. These writers and others have decided that issues which support concepts of equality and individual opportunity are right and just but they are very critical of the concept of equal group results.

Equal group results are very closely aligned with the data needs and the data that were generated during the prior two decades. The power of these arguments can not be underestimated; over the last few years they have moved from the level of policy discourse to that of actual political action. Affirmative action today is believed to constitute an injustice to people of European descent and that idea has achieved wide currency in the current administration.<sup>1</sup>

We have to understand one other aspect and that is the quantitative nature of our society. Over the last two decades we have increased our dependency on data to assess, identify and determine need. Magnitude and need are often equated with one another and this has become an important issue for minorities. We understand the concept of allocation and its importance to resources. But I would argue that this information is much more important for Hispanics, Asians and for



African-Americans and that the data affirm their realities. In my paper I try to deal a little bit with the fact that this issue is not as dispassionate as we have treated it at this conference. I have some quotes: two of the people who gave presentations at public meetings with the Census Bureau. These persons express anger, frustration and resentment and they target all of this towards the Census Bureau and other agencies that collect information.

The sensitivity or the inaccuracies of the data become a focal point for their sense of accumulated injustices. With all this at stake, data accuracy becomes a very important issue, as you might imagine. Persistence of the undercount, for example, continues to be a very important and political issue. In many ways, attention has shifted away from just the collection of data to concerns about data accuracy. At the same time, for the Census Bureau race and ethnic data may be more difficult to obtain in the future.

We've discussed this during the day to some extent but I would like to bring out two other issues which have been discussed recently in regard to the Black population. This is a group which racially we feel is the clearest cut and the one with the least amount of fuzziness around it. Yet, in some results that have been recently made available, the Census Bureau notes that the data we've used since 1940 for evaluating counts of Blacks have probably been wrong. Analysts made an overestimation of under-registered Black births; the result was that we recently dropped about 206,000 Blacks from the demographic analysis method of estimating the undercount in order to adjust for an error that's been there since 1940. Also, in the demographic analysis method, recent results show that we are looking at 9.8 million people who report their race as "other race". In using demographic analysis to estimate the undercount, it is necessary to make an adjustment and assign those persons to either the Black or non-Black category. The result is that right now we allocate about a half million people into the Black category from the other race to comprise and reconstruct that population.

The issues that have arisen for Hispanics center mainly on confusion over the race question. The Hispanic question, I think, is clear. With American Indians, it's the opposite situation; the information on the race question appears to be more accurate than the ancestry and ethnicity data. And, finally, there are issues that arise with other groups. To put this all together, I think it is important to understand that data are very much influenced by the way in which the objectives of the government shift over time. At the present time they have shifted and the pendulum is swinging in the other direction.

I will finish off by speculating about what is in store for us in the year 2000. I would hope that I will be wrong in some of my predictions. But these are what I would have for the year 2000, based on the way things are today and what I see of the influences of the political system upon the census.

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The first one is that ancestry will be much more highly emphasized in the future and that the race and Hispanic origin items will be de-emphasized. This comes as a result of several things; for example, the growing resistance to race and ethnicity which is part of the backlash that everyone sees. I think it will show up in other ways as well. It's not that we won't collect the information but that we will see more of the dependent variables become independent variables. We will see Hispanic origin, for example, by language or race, by geography and then associated with a dependent variable.

I think it is quite clear that the parental birthplace question will be returned to the census. The issue of generations has become very critical at present. For instance, Linda Chavez, in her book on Hispanics, argues that the problems of Hispanics are first-generation issues that will go away over time and that they can be studied with generation data. I expect words like "minority" to disappear from our lexicon and perhaps, more importantly, I predict that at some point in the near future there will be major litigation against the whole concept of self-identification. I see this coming simply because the times have changed. The governmental position on issues has changed. The Census Bureau is caught between the government which is undergoing changes in its policy objectives (it pays the bills which you can't forget) and on the other side, the various groups that it works closely with and nurtures. Their cooperation is needed for the census. The Bureau is caught between the two but they are evolving in the direction of less emphasis on race and Hispanic origin.

The second thing I expect is that there will be a lot more emphasis given to immigration. In part, it's a demographic reality that immigration has a greater role in our overall growth. I expect in the next census that the immigration question will not only be emphasized but will be expanded to include much more information. And I expect that the item on citizenship will probably also be given greater attention.

Third, I am rather certain that whatever question is used, probably ancestry, we will have to allow for multiple responses. We are moving towards that direction; the realities make us understand that it is necessary.

The fourth thing which may occur is that the whole issue of access to data will become more important. With this census access to data is becoming a significant issue as there is a widening divide between the technological haves and have-nots. As we go through the process of trying to recover the cost of the census, I expect that those who can afford data and data analysis will be separated from those who can not. Ethnic or racial groups that are very much a part of the census effort will make demands that will be very difficult to meet under those circumstances.

And finally, I would predict that the next census will be the most contentious ever. Everybody thought that the last one was but I expect the next one to be worse. In many ways the discussions about the year 2000 Census bring forth a lot of important information that needs to



be discussed. One should understand that a lot of the problems that occurred in the past have to do with our ties to old ways of doing things. For example, some argue that the census methodology that we use in the United States has reached its limits and that it's time to move on to something else but there are ways in which this affects race and ethnicity. There is a very important fight that occurred both within and outside the Census Bureau and finally the halls of Congress regarding the questions that would be appropriate for Asians and Pacific Islanders. What was basic to the conflict was the technology; it was dependent on a system that's called FOSDIC. With FOSDIC, only those items that are circled get special attention and become immediately available. In the end the compromise entailed coding all the write-ins.

I think that the Census Bureau really has to go in one of two directions; it cannot just depend on a refinement of the 1990 Census methodology. To do so would probably put it in a position of having to accept some kind of adjustment. The only other alternative is to move in a very dramatic way away from past methodology. This would create great turmoil because it would affect historical continuity; and in the case of race and ethnic data it would require some new approaches. New approaches have been suggested by many people and I don't disagree on a research basis with the necessity for looking at new and different ways. However, one should realize what it means to the ethnic and racial groups in America. They will interpret these new approaches in a very simple way, that is, that we are trying to mask reality. Perhaps most importantly they will view it as the Census Bureau destroying information which could allow us to understand the past and the present and how we move on to the future.

The debates that I expect to occur will be quite strident. The issues we are discussing here are going to serve a very important role in the debates regarding race and ethnicity for the year 2000. These discussions will be exacerbated by the fact that we continue to have strong demand for more accurate data, along with increasing uncertainty about them. As long as race, religion and ethnic group play an important role in the distribution of prestige, status, rewards or punishment in society, labels to designate these groups become or remain necessary and take on socially created significance. When jobs are given or withheld, promotions granted or denied or equal opportunities for education made available or not available on the basis of a person's racial background, then what a person is called becomes important and often critical. That is why the Census Bureau, as one of the primary sources of race and ethnic data, will continue to be in the midst of the political arena as the United States determines its commitment to a culturally pluralistic society.

### **Audrey Kobayashi**

A number of things have struck me in this conference. One is the tremendous complexity of the issues with which we are trying to deal, but I am not going to be too complex in my talk. I want to focus upon community groups and the political dimensions of their definitions of



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ethnicity. Many of the things I say, however, have applications throughout the whole political process. The other observation I would make is that the issues we are talking about are political to the core. Unless we keep that thought in mind and recognize it throughout the whole process, we are bound to have problems with the data, the way they are presented, and the way in which they are interpreted.

I am going to give a very brief theoretical background that applies to all aspects of the political process and then focus on a few examples of political complexity at the community level. Finally, if I have time, I will make a few suggestions about technical things that might address these problems.

Certainly, of the many difficulties that surround the definition of ethnicity not the least is the extent to which it varies under socio-political conditions in multicultural Canada. I think that lesson is coming home to us on a daily basis because we negotiate our ethnicity: 1) through constitutional debate, 2) through issues of the status of Quebec, 3) the status of First Nations people, and 4) a number of other issues, not the least of which is the way in which we deal with racism. My paper briefly addresses the contested terrain of ethnicity in Canada and outlines some of the challenges that researchers, politicians, policy makers and the other groups represented in this room face. I suspect, though, that I will present more problems than can be easily addressed through the census itself.

The challenge for those who are required to reduce social reality to a set of descriptive conventions is to make these conventions representative. We have heard the word, representative, used a number of times in the last few days. We have used it here in three distinct but interrelated ways. There is an everyday meaning that has two senses. One refers to the provision of an accurate typification of a group or class. This is fairly straightforward, although we may debate what accurate means. The second refers to the authority, legitimacy, or qualification to represent a group or a class. This is an area that is highly contested in terms of who represents whom at the political and at the community level. Both meanings, of course, are subject to a range of interpretations and need to be understood in light of a third meaning.

We have derived the third meaning mainly from recent literature in cultural studies which refers to the fact that all representation is ideological and reflects social conditions. In addition, representation is a process in which not only the population in general, but also social scientists and other commentators on social phenomenon, ideologically construct a realm of meaning through the process of representation. This third meaning challenges any naive notion that representation is a matter of establishing truth. It directs attention beyond the objective, to the relationships between people and text which I shall call here "statistexts." This term refers to the use of census data to describe social groups and to the discourse through which they are constructed in the process of representation.

Edward Said's notion of orientalism, I think, depicts very well the ways in which dominant cultural groups have instructed the others in ways that have not simply created images along ethnic or racial lines. Although certainly the dominant culture has done that and the images they created may be misleading or demeaning or prejudicial, through representational practices they have also affected unequal relations of power and affected in specific and often unanticipated ways the social conditions of represented groups.

I would suggest that the census is capable of supporting the aims of the dominant culture. One thing is very sure. The words that we use to reduce social groups to statistical categories are political inventions. Certainly, just to give one example, the invention of the word "Indian," presumably by Columbus 500 years ago, has meant much more than simply the kinds of technical problems that have arisen in the census in trying to interpret it.

So the discourse of representation is not a one-way process. Any discussion of how census categories can reflect the reality of ethnocultural groups needs to take into account the fluidity of social categories. Statistics are a temporally and conceptually restricted attempt to quantify that fluidity – to freeze a social dialectic by creating analytical suspension of belief. I do not suggest that the project of collecting such data is useless and impossible (though it may be in principle). In addition, I do not suggest that such efforts should be abandoned, nor should we ignore the significant methodological and economic problems of data collection. But we should recognize the need for critical examination of our categories and of our means of establishing the categories in light of what goes on at the community level.

I have a section in my paper on multiculturalism which I will not discuss here. I will say, however, that to understand what goes on at the political level in Canada, it is important to recognize that any interpretation of ethnicity and any construction, reconstruction, or representation of ethnicity has to be understood against a background of multicultural policy. This policy conditions everything that happens from the level of the government down to the grass roots.

As a second part to my discussion of multiculturalism, I think we also have to recognize that multiculturalism policy has had specific implications for the way in which Canadians live their lives. Again, these issues are too complicated for me to go into here but the twin objectives of cultural preservation and equality among population groups have not yet been achieved and there are a number of questions about the effectiveness of the policy. We need to recognize that the representation of certain groups as other than normative Canadians has persisted with a considerable degree of strength. Thus, no matter what one's position may be about the multicultural nature of our society, we need to look very closely at the way that this persistence has occurred and at the way in which inequality cuts through our society as a result.



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What we do need are ways of understanding how conflicting representations, which are always tied to ideological interests, condition the emergence of ethnic group definitions. Such an agenda calls for extensive empirical work on the community scale — work that cannot be realistically done with macro techniques such as the census. Here are a few examples that perhaps begin to sketch the contours of the very dramatic kinds of reconfiguration of ethnicity that have occurred in Canada. Much of this change is a direct product of the reconfiguration of the international landscape resulting from research on nationalism throughout the world. This research inevitably has had an effect upon so-called ethnic relations in Canada.

European nationalism has been played out in the Canadian scene in a number of ways. The issue of the census reflecting Dutch rather than German background in 1941 has been mentioned a couple of times. Certainly those with roots in the Baltic states and in Eastern Europe have long expressed in Canada a fierce nationalistic pride that has affected the way in which ethnic politics have been conducted in this country. It certainly suffuses the community organization that represents those groups in Canada.

Canadians of Macedonian ancestry similarly define themselves according to a heritage which they believe to be shared rather than as part of one of the four nation-states that now encompass the ancient territory of Macedonia. Of course, this position is very much opposed to that taken by both Greeks and the Canadian Hellenic Congress in Canada, which are in direct opposition to the existence of Macedonian as an ethnocultural group in Canada.

The issue is far more complex, though, than simple transplantation of ethnocultural allegiances based on nationalistic movements elsewhere. I would caution against any sort of simplistic interpretation. For one thing, Canada's ethnocultural groups are influenced to one degree or another by their specific immigration history. The time at which a group came to Canada and the particular part of the original country's population that immigrated all make a very big difference in this respect. Certainly those who came prior to and after World War I are very different in the ways in which they approach political issues. Today, those who are classed as refugees fleeing repressive or otherwise unacceptable regimes have a very different kind of agenda than those who have come under different circumstances, especially as economic migrants.

At the same time the Canadian government has always emphasized the principle that intercultural strife has no place in the Canadian multicultural agenda. The government does everything possible from structuring social services to funding community organizations — at times, to outright intervention. I could give you a number of examples where the government has intervened to mediate these differences. In so doing, the state provides official recognition of one "ethnicity," one group over another, and the subsequent representation of the legitimacy of certain groups can not fail to shape the contours of multiculturalism in this country.



As a result, ethnocultural groups within Canada have developed sometimes powerful but certainly explicit political strategies that are divisive, cooperative, or sometimes a mixture of both, in response to that political situation. The social definition of ethnicity in Canada is this very highly ideologically charged, as it is negotiated between the state and civil society.

One very cogent example at the moment is that of Black Canadians and immigrants from Ethiopia. Most Ethiopian immigrants have arrived in Canada very recently, at a time when Black Canadians of an immense variety of ethnocultural backgrounds (including those with generations of history in North America as well as those who have recently come from Africa or the Caribbean) have been working very hard to foster a pan-African identity in the face of continuing racism at all levels of Canadian society.

Ethiopian Canadians, however, have tended to remain aloof from such coalitions and have focused attention on fostering pan-Ethiopian linkages through an organization called the Federation of Ethiopian-Canadian Associations. This association is now officially recognized and receives funding from the Department of Multiculturalism. It also has membership on the Canadian Ethnocultural Council.

This official representation, though, is considered by many Ethiopian-Canadians as *legerdemain* in that it masks the fact that Ethiopian-Canadians are not culturally homogenous and Ethiopia as a nation state is the contested ground of several traditional groups. A recent thesis completed by one of my students, Craig Forcese, notes that while the dominant group, the Amhara, fosters a pan-Ethiopian identity, other groups such as the Tigrayans, Eritrians, and Oromo try to promote their own ethnic identity. Representatives of antagonistic factions at home, the members of these groups in Canada have formed organizations to sell subgroup distinctiveness to a government or population which does not afford them official recognition. In a recent paper by Sorenson, he notes that there seems little chance for recognition and acceptance by external sources of self-definition for the Eritreans and Oromos, given opposition to the maintenance of distinct ethnic and national identities from the Canadian government, opposition from the Ethiopian community, hostility from other African immigrants and a general ignorance of African issues from the Canadian public as a whole.

This discourse comprises a number of competing representations. The dominant view, held by public as well as official opinion, places all the groups under the primary designation of "Black." Although this term has no meaning or a different meaning for Eritreans and Oromos, their struggle to define themselves in their own terms is encircled by the dominant discourse on multiculturalism. The result is perhaps a lessening of tendencies to import foreign conflicts, but it is also a reinforcement of a process of ethnocultural definition where conflicting representations fracture and merge along established lines of power. The resulting statistexts are to say the least both reduced and modified.

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What is left out of this discussion is the point that, however little recent immigrants may relate to the established concerns of other Afro-Canadians, the context in which they find themselves makes those concerns impossible to avoid. They inevitably will experience racism as Blacks, not as Ethiopians or Eritreans. Circumstances will push them to choose a number of different political strategies, including affiliation with the generic category "Black" that was originally rooted, I would suggest, in racism but has become a symbol of political unity. This point represents the great irony of the ways in which a political discourse changes its contours.

The term "Black" is a political and ideological statistext no matter in which of the political contexts it is used. It reinscribes the notion of "race," and I use race in quotation marks, as a legitimate means of distinguishing human beings. Even though the census is a major way of legitimizing the particular kinds of differences that mark a society and even if it recognizes that race is a social construction, it is still a product of racism.

That does not thereby make "race" a figment of our imagination — I would call it more like a pigment of our imagination. It is a legacy of subordination and domination, a legacy of colonialism, imperialism, capitalism, fascism and all of the other "isms." The fact that the notion has recently become useful as a means of political resistance means that it will be some time before this particular human perversity is transcended. The creators of statistexts, of course, have a major role to play in this regard and continue to perpetuate the notion.

I have a number of other examples in my paper but I am not going to give all of them here. Let me just refer quickly to another site of struggle which is the Canadian Ethnocultural Council (CEC). This major umbrella group, which represents ethnocultural groups in Canada, represents about 2,000 local and provincial organizations. It is a lobby group and certainly one of the country's most active and effective lobby groups. I should say that I am active and involved in that association. I looked at recent applications to membership in the CEC for several groups. One was the World Sikh Federation which applied last July for representation on the CEC and was turned down on the grounds that they are already represented by the National Association of Canadians of Origin in India. The other was the Macedonian Association which was turned down on the grounds that it is already represented by the Canadian Hellenic Congress. In both cases, the position was put forward by the two groups and was debated at length (and fairly emotionally I might add). When the judgement was given by the CEC, it was clear that the difficulty of representation goes far beyond either the political relationship or the community itself. Many Canadians may not be aware of the kind of negotiation that takes place on their behalf through representation at various levels. These processes filter down to the level at which the CEC negotiates directly with the staff of Statistics Canada.

As another example, the Canadian Hispanic Congress made a presentation at the same meeting at which these two applications were turned down. The Canadian Hispanic Congress asked that the CEC support its position to Statistics Canada that Hispanics should be a check box on the



census question on ethnicity. It claimed that Canada misrepresents Hispanics by undercounting them and by not providing a specific designation of the word "Hispanics."

The political benefits of playing the numbers game in Canada are quite extensive. By securing representation of a large proportion of the Canadian population, the Canadian Hispanic Congress extends its political power at the grass roots level within the national network that includes the CEC. At the present time this organization has a significant stake in the immigration process because the demographic structure of its constituency is changing quite rapidly as a result of refugee immigration from Central and South America. On the other hand, the status of this organization within Canada is very different than it is within the United States.

As a result, the claim of the Canadian Hispanic Congress brings to the fore all the problems of ethnic definitions and exposes very sharply the political dimensions. In contrast to the many nationalist-based organizations such as the United Macedonian Association, the Canadian Hispanic Congress is internationalist in ideology. Its map of representation resembles more the former Spanish Colonial Empire than it does a map of ethnocultural tradition. The common ties of Spanish language and shared political history mask the differences that have been created by colonial intervention and regional disparities. What is significant in the Canadian Hispanic Congress' vision of ethnicity is that it constitutes of representation of history in a form that fits the Canadian way of doing politics. In the process this vision creates a new set of statistexts that reflects this political negotiation.

I am not going to go into the technical recommendations that I have. Maybe some of those have come out already anyway, but I want to make a couple of concluding points about this political process. One is that these are just a few examples of the ways in which ethnocultural politics are negotiated in Canada. This is a very difficult thing to do because Canada has a relatively small population. It became very clear to me in doing this research the extent to which very small groups of people and in some cases individuals can make a big difference in the process. Sometimes they co-opt the whole process. For that reason, I have some real questions about the way in which issues such as self-identification can be politically manipulated.

Finally, if I were to develop other examples, I would show that the process is thoroughly gendered; this is not an issue that has come up a great deal in the last two days. So I want to make sure that the last point I leave with you reinforces the need to pay special attention to how ethnicity is negotiated through gender, especially given the fact that the emergence of patriarchy has particular ethnocultural forms.



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### **6.3 Working Group Discussions**

This chapter summarizes the major observations and the key points of discussion which arose during the working group deliberations. No attempt is made to attribute specific comments or observations to any individual or group. Instead, the summaries from all the group discussions have been blended into one comprehensive synopsis.

#### *Issues*

The issues that the working groups were asked to consider dealt with the effect that the socio-political environment has on the agencies collecting the data, on the respondents providing the information and on the uses and users of the data. The following questions (in italics) were offered in order to focus the discussion of the groups. A summary of the discussions appears below each question.

1. *Is it possible to obtain reliable data on race and ethnicity when racial and ethnic identities are changing? Is the quality of the data defensible? How do geographic and cultural factors affect the quality of data on race and ethnicity?*

It was generally concluded that it is possible to obtain reliable data. However, consideration must be given to the fact that ethnicity is a dynamic, changing human condition. It was suggested that open-ended questions would help in understanding the nature and extent of the change. Two factors which may affect the quality of the data are the loss of ethnic memory, which occurs when the language associated with a particular group is lost, and the length of time a particular ethnic group has been removed from its ancestral homeland. This may be further compounded by changes in geo-political conditions. It was observed that historical continuity is important although not easily achieved. Given the dynamic nature of the concept, care must be exercised when making comparisons over time. With respect to data quality, it was suggested that national statistical agencies have a responsibility to establish and maintain recognized levels of reliability. However, agencies were cautioned against using quality as the sole condition for release of data. In the specific case of the criminal justice system there exist technical limitations to collecting the data. Neither law enforcement officials nor the "clients" of the system, victims or accused, are necessarily trained or motivated to collect the data and/or provide suitable responses.

2. *Do political or legal definitions of race and ethnicity drive or affect racial/ethnic classifications? To what extent should political pressure affect the question(s)? What should the balance be between political forces and research on the way the questions are asked?*

It was agreed that political and/or legal definitions have a significant impact on racial/ethnic classifications. The case of the changes in terminology for the Black population in the United States was quoted as an example. In some instances, counts by ethnic or racial group are used to establish entitlements. In other instances they serve to introduce some degree of cultural sensitivity and awareness into societal institutions such as the justice system. Working group participants concluded, as a result, that these data and the processes by which they are collected are, at times, vulnerable to political pressure. Participants felt that political pressures were appropriate but that they must be applied constructively, either through consultation or representation rather than by boycotting the collection instrument. It was noted that political pressure can easily become counterproductive when not properly channelled. It was also suggested that, to enhance cultural awareness and sensitivity, the staff in statistical agencies should reflect the cultural diversity of the population. This may serve to create a harmonious situation rather than an adversarial process.

3. *For respondents, is race/ethnicity relevant? Are the boundaries between ethnic groups becoming unclear so as to obscure the classification? What is the impact of the respondent's perception on the quality of the data?*

It was observed that there is a need for people to be able to associate themselves with particular ethnic origins and identities for social, political or economic reasons. However, this is not true for all groups. For instance, second and third generation Northern and Western Europeans do not necessarily attach the same importance to ethnic identity as Southern or Eastern Europeans or members of ethnic groups who do not have an extensive history in a host country. The context in which the data are collected may affect respondents' perception of the quality of the data. In some situations respondents may be in an emotional state which causes them to question the relevance of the data. For instance, in the criminal justice system, law enforcement officials' perception of the classification may bias responses provided by either the victim or the accused, neither of whom may place any importance on the value of the data. It was noted that the issues of relevance and perception become more acute in multiethnic and multiracial societies.

4. *Are race and ethnic categories too subjective and too ill-defined for meaningful and comparative analysis?*

It was concluded that, taken on their own, the answer is yes. However, combined with other characteristics these data serve to shed light on significant issues such as societal biases and discrimination. It was noted that care must be exercised not to attribute non-existent precision to the data. It was also suggested that some of the categories, such as Hispanic, may be perceived as too bureaucratic and, thus, may engender nonresponse or respondent error.

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5. *What can we (statistical agencies) do to improve the communication of the complexity of measuring race/ethnicity to users, researchers and respondents?*

It is important for statistical agencies to consider users as full partners in the process, not simply as end-point consumers. Agencies are urged to conduct more outreach programs and to make greater use of local media. In testing of questions and concepts, statistical agencies are encouraged to focus on regions and subgroups. The results of testing activities should yield some indication of how definitions and classifications are changing. It was also recommended that agencies help users make the data work for them. This includes publishing more accessible and clear information that is geared to schools, colleges and community groups.

6. *How is the changing political structure of the world affecting current efforts at collection of data on ethnicity versus ethnic data?*

One of the effects of the changing political structure is an increase in migration, which could affect both the collection of the data and the classification of ethnic groups. Caution was suggested since this may lead to over-fragmenting ethnic classifications, thereby rendering them meaningless.

7. *Should racial/ethnic categories be influenced by demographic factors such as immigration?*

Given that these data are often used to calculate rates and percentages, demographic factors such as migration will have an effect on the denominators. This must be taken into account during analysis. Factors such as migration will also influence the collection methods and systems.

8. *How should data on ethnicity be dealt with in the justice system?*

There was a consensus that collecting this type of information is desirable. However, no agreement was reached on how to overcome the problems of methodology (i.e. who should collect the information and with what vehicle) and sensitivity among ethnic communities. Clear evidence of the sensitivity of this issue was provided by the media and community reaction to including ethnic/racial characteristics in the Uniform Crime Reporting system. All agreed that race, by itself, is an inadequate indicator of ethnic differentials in criminal activity.



9. *How should data on ethnicity be dealt with in health statistics?*

Health statistics do not currently exist in a single source of data and, hence, there is a definite requirement to link a variety of data sources to develop a composite picture. With respect to ethnic/race categories, they serve as numerators in calculations of rates and incidence within health statistics. At present, few administrative files include data on ethnicity or race. Since vital statistics are often more reliable than health statistics due to the discrete nature of the event, some effort should be made to encourage the appropriate organizations to include data on ethnicity or race in their files.

## 6.4 Floor Discussion

The discussion that followed the reports from the working groups raised a number of issues concerning both the context in which the data are collected and used and the concepts and definitions that are applied in data collection. It was noted that in many cases there is a lack of consistency between the concepts of ethnicity in statistical surveys and those used in administrative data sources. This problem may be further exacerbated by inconsistent application of classification criteria within the same source. The example cited was the changes in the attribution of racial origin in birth vital statistics records in the United States, which was recently changed from patrilineal to matrilineal descent. Conference participants clearly recommended that attempts be made to harmonize concepts and ensure a degree of consistency in their application.

It was also suggested that data-collection national agencies such as statistical agencies and administrative bodies should not lose sight of the statistical and analytic potential of the data. Furthermore, data users should be conscious of the distinctions between what data are collected, how they are processed (including coding and classification systems) and what is published.

Ethnic communities have a direct stake in the kind of data that are collected, the methodology used and how the data are presented. It was recommended that all agencies that collect ethnic data consult with representatives from ethnic communities and establish close and on-going formal and informal lines of communication. National statistical agencies could increase their sensitivity to ethnic concerns by including representatives from the communities either on their staffs or as members of advisory committees.

Similarly, apart from the points raised in the working group on the justice system, it was noted that an imbalance often exists between the racial and ethnic composition of jurors and that of defendants. Correction of this problem could result in greater sensitivity to ethnic concerns and variations in the justice system.

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### Note

1. The Joint Canada-United States Conference on the Measurement of Ethnicity was held before the November 1992 election in the United States.

## ***7. Focus for the Future***

### **7.1 Introduction**

The final session of the conference dealt with the outlook for ethnic measurement. The papers presented by Professors Monica Boyd of Carleton University and Charles Hirschman, University of Washington, covered predictions, proposals and suggestions for the future development of census questions on race and ethnicity. The session was chaired by Professor Mary Waters who also acted as discussant.

After the presentations Waters outlined some of the themes that both papers had discussed. She also highlighted the significant similarities and differences between the situations of Canada and the United States. She then opened the session to questions from the floor. The conference closed with a stimulating open discussion and debate.

### **7.2 Summary of Presentations**

#### **Monica Boyd**

I want to look at some aspects of the issue of measuring ethnicity that are different than what Charles Hirschman has done. Charles has focused on the measurement of ethnicity, what are we looking at and why. What I want to do is take a more institutional approach and take as a basis a starting set of assumptions: 1) we are in the business of measuring ethnicity; 2) that the two statistical agencies represented and sponsoring this conference are, in fact, faced with real problems about how to go about measuring ethnicity; and 3) that, therefore, there are a number of additional considerations that we need to take into account when we focus on the future.

Let me begin with why we are here at this conference. It's perplexing because ideally for North American statisticians measuring ethnicity ought to be a matter of little debate. The task should be one of assessing results in terms of the principles of social science and social survey research. But the reality of ethnic measurement strongly counters this ideal, for reasons that many of you have already noted. That is, ethnicity is a slippery concept and an overburdened term. It includes multiple dimensions – ancestry, birthplace, etc., and the term is characterized by ambiguity in the use of these dimensions to depict membership in a statistical category, membership in a social group and ethnicity in the sense of belongingness.

A second reason, however, for the gap between the ideal world of measurement and reality is that statistical agencies do not operate in a vacuum; rather, they have diverse calls for data, must be attentive to public concerns and must also be players in an arena that consists of other government organizations. For statistical agencies the way ethnicity is measured is neither accidental nor random but rather reflects past practices, responses to external lobbying and



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legislative requirements. Furthermore, input themselves are not static in content. Like measures of social change they assure a temporal variation in the questions which ethnic data must answer and, thus, how the measurement of ethnicity is approached and undertaken.

And, finally, if this recap of everything that Stan Lieberman said right at the outset isn't sufficient, we know without question that all nations have their own histories. Not all countries measure ethnicity in the same way, collect the data for the same reasons and use them to answer the same questions. The uniqueness and diversity of concerns defy prescribing uniform sets of questions on ethnicity that are applicable to all countries.

What then does the future of ethnic measurement hold? The glib answer is twofold. There will be a continuation of current attempts to produce data that are useful for demographic, social and political purposes and this endeavour will include all current and old questions as well as efforts to devise new ones using the criteria of social science research. And this alteration and innovation will require grappling with what have been the two major themes in this conference: the dimensions of race and ancestry; and the issues concerning ethnic categorization vs. identity.

A serious answer returns us, however, to the fact that all countries do have histories. I argue in my paper that we must understand, as well, a country's specific factors: the current measure of ethnicity in a country reflects the demographic, social and political bases for its existence. Ultimately, these factors, the social, demographic and political bases, derive from ideologies of nationhood, nation building, the associated agendas and the incorporation or disavowal of ethnicity into those agendas. As the historian William McNeil has noted, issues of ethnicity cannot be dissociated from questions of who we are and what shall we be. With this in mind, I have undertaken in my paper a case study of Canada.

I try to point out the themes that need to be explored in the future — ethnic ancestry, ethnic identity, ethnic categorization and the like. For statistical agencies these themes' existence and measurement are determined by four variations of the P word: population; practicality; policies; and the political arena. Population is obvious: its changes represent a base upon which we seek to measure changes in ethnicity. We have seen this in Canada with the changing migration history and something similar has occurred in the United States. The emergence of issues revolving around the Hispanic population in the United States reflects a changing ethnic diversity there. In Canada, the changes in immigration law in the 1960s and the 1970s permitted the entry of persons from non-European regions, heretofore denied, and the result is that we have a growing population of visible minorities.

The issue of population, however, in itself is not sufficient nor is the issue of practicality. I am using practicality in a very narrow sense to refer essentially to what we can call technical considerations or the application of principals of sound social survey methodology. We also have to recognize that why we care about population changes, why we care about precise

measurements, is linked to the other two P words, to the politics and to the policies. Policies themselves, as I've indicated, are in a sense representations of nation-building agendas.

In Canada there is no question that a country characterized by diverse regions, by several charter groups forged out of a history of conflict, colonization and domination, has created a need to unify these geographical regions and autonomous groups. This returns us in a way to the theme of the role of the state.

Looking at the public policy arena in Canada during the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, there have been a number of initiatives in creating a pan-Canadian identity. Typically, when nations or countries engage in the development of social welfare programs, income security and the like, they create means of incorporating their citizenship into a realm of entitlements. I think that one can also look at the development of Canadian multiculturalism policies, as well as employment equity, as part of larger national strategies for ensuring a fair share and for ensuring the incorporation of diversity within a more universal membership in Canada.

Armed with that observation, I would indeed argue that we can not lose sight of the policy arena. Many of us have said that, obviously, legislation is a driver in the consideration or rationale for measuring ethnicity, particularly by statistical agencies. But the driver itself is imbedded in a broader social and political context. One of my points in the paper is that it has to do with images of nation building, who we are and what we shall become. At the same time, to simply focus on policies along with the population and practicality issues is to miss what has been the object of the previous discussion: that all decisions are influenced and, in some instances, take place within a political arena. And in my paper I go and review a number of options and deliberations that were considered during the development of the 1991 Census of Canada.

I review the fact that the ethnic origin variable was seen in need of modification. There were attempts to put an ethnic identity question on the program as well as to measure Canadian as a category in both the ethnic identity and the ethnic ancestry questions. There were questions tested on race. The initial explanation for the failure of these alternative questions – questions that really would have tried to address the issues I've talked about, the need to move from ethnic categorization to ethnic identity, away from ancestry – was that they all failed ultimately on what could be called practical or technical matters.

However, they are embedded in a broader political context. Statistics Canada, like the U.S. Census Bureau, is simply an organization that must participate in a broader political arena. It must convince Cabinet of the need to support its endeavour and, in fact, when a question such as ethnic identity fails on technical reasons it becomes very dangerous for an organization to try and fight for it. The situation in Statistics Canada was complicated by something that happens to all organizations at some point or another – vulnerability.



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The 1986 Census was at one point cancelled and then brought back as a result of individual protests and lobbying. Working as it does from a base of expertise and sound social research, Statistics Canada could not and would not put itself in a position of going to field, the statistics field, census field, with a question that technically had failed. There are other interesting reasons for the reluctance to do so for what Lieberman has referred to as the conservative stance by organizations. The year 1986 was also a watershed year with the refusal of many aboriginal bands to be counted. It was a year in which there was an attempt to field an aboriginal question that didn't work and so there were a series of rationales for why, despite a keen interest in putting ethnic identity and Canadian on, it did not go.

However, organizational participation in a broad political arena is only one aspect of the political process. Another is representation by constituencies. It was the case that the Ethnocultural Council of Canada, in particular, and other organizations had a preference for the maintaining of the old ancestry question and in the context of a whole range of issues, including technical considerations, practical considerations and other issues, that view certainly was listened to. The result is that when we turn to the future of what it is we are measuring, we have to look very clearly not only at sound social science but also take into account the role of technical considerations and the roles of population, politics and policies.

The final section of my paper looks at some of the potential issues that might arise on the Canadian scene as a result of these considerations. I note, for example, that one of the issues on the horizon will probably be an increased movement of Hispanic populations into Canada as a result of the Free Trade Agreement currently being negotiated by the United States, Canada and Mexico. There will be demands for measuring second generation immigrants and these will need a strong constituency, a strong support.

Here I would bring in one more comment that is not in my paper but which is crucial and that is the role of the intellectual community. It strikes me as an aside that in the United States the academic community through its lobbying and through the various institutions that it has, such as the National Academy of Science, is seen as a very strong player in the broad public arena of interest groups. In Canada, while the academic community participates as individuals, it, in fact, is a very weak lobbying group. To simply say academics or experts think something is important will probably not float if there are other compelling reasons operating against whatever recommendations are being made.

The quality issues, again, provide a benchmark against which we will see attempts to ask different ethnic questions. I come to the end of my paper with where we have begun. We are all space cadets on the Star Ship Enterprise, armed with the latest technology and with the most precise aim that only a body of more than 100 experts can bring to bear. We are relentlessly pursuing an amorphous object which changes in size, complexion, colour as it is hurled through time and space. I look forward to this next conference on ethnicity.



**Charles Hirschman**

I have been studying ethnicity for most of my career and explaining to students and colleagues all the problems with the measurement of ethnicity I love to tell people what to do. I love to tell my children, my colleagues, and my students, but I must admit, with little success over the years. Nonetheless, I still have faith that this is my opportunity to try to set the record straight and to have the illusion of power that I can clarify the concept of ethnicity and how to measure it.

My paper consists of two parts. The first part is the review of problems of ethnic measurement and the concepts of ethnicity. The second part is a recommendation for the clear conceptualization of ethnicity with some illustrative ways in which one can measure those conceptualizations.

The first part, and much of what I have written on the topic, could follow from the last two days of the conference. Indeed much of it follows from much of the writings of the people who are participating in this conference — Stanley Lieberson, Mary Waters, Reynolds Farley, and Richard Alba, who is not here. All of them have written about the topic and have influenced my own thinking on the subject.

***Problems of Ethnic Measurement***

We seem to be having more and more data on ethnicity but are enjoying it less. We have ethnic groups in flux. We have multiple ethnicities. We have symbolic ethnicities. We have people without ethnicity. Measuring ethnicity is clearly not what it used to be. It is fuzzy and it is hard to grasp exactly what we have.

What is there really new to say on this subject? I only have a very small contribution but I will make the most of it. Essentially, it is that the entire concept of race and ethnicity is based upon a false assumption. The assumption that underlies ethnicity, even among those who criticize the application of ethnicity at the present time, is that once upon a time it really did measure something. They assume that a hundred years ago, five hundred years ago, a thousand years ago there really were endogamous communities that had separate cultures, separate languages, separate phenotypes - something that made them really different. Then, according to this assumption, somehow the modern world, particularly this last few decades or so, seems to have confused these separate ethnic groups and identities.

I doubt this assumption. The modern world, and even the pre-modern world has a history of ethnic mixing, absorption and creation. We really do not have a good word for these terms. A couple of generations ago there were a variety of words — miscegenation, interbreeding, amalgamation — that were bandied around, but they all have sort of an odious ring at the present

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time. To find something I could talk about without apologizing, I am using the word "ethnic blending". By this, I refer both to the ambiguity faced by mixed offspring people from different ethnic origins and the large-scale shift of ethnic identification from one group to another.

If one wants to address this question over a long span of history, the usual cannons of statistical modelling do not really work. My strategy is essentially to argue by example. This is not the best way to make an argument but it is the only one to deal with this issue. The examples are legion, and you probably know most of them already.

The entire New World consists of admixtures of peoples of native American origin, of African origin, and of European origin, which we really do not know the relative magnitudes. This is not only true of the New World, but there are also many examples that one can find in Europe and Asia as well.

I will not review these materials now, but I can refer you to another paper that I have written on ethnic blending. Essentially the conclusion is that all of our attempts to fix ethnic classifications, to devise ad hoc rules to handle the odd case and to classify people who do not claim ethnicity is based on false assumptions. Contemporary ethnic differences are not objective in the sense that there are original differences that have been maintained over time. All ethnic categories have been socially constructed at one time or another. Essentially even what appears to be fixed at the present time would be shaky if we were to look at it over a longer period of history.

Now, if what I have said is true, then, one of the most obvious inferences is that ethnicity should be unimportant. But ethnicity is important. We are here today because we cannot measure the concept of ethnicity, which everyone does regard as important.

### *Ethnicity as a Central Political Dimension*

I think ethnicity is probably the central political dimension of the 20th century. It is not only the countries that are represented here at the conference - the United States, Canada, Malaysia, England, Australia - but also in much of the rest of the world. We can hardly study the 20th century and think about India or Eastern Europe or Ireland or take our eyes off the television to realize that ethnic divisions, and ethnic violence are the central political issues of our times. It is not only ethnic violence but ethnic inequality, the division of political boundaries, the funding of federal agencies that are important.

I come to an apparent contradiction. On the one hand, we have ethnicity as the defining issue of our societies. On the other hand, we have ethnicity as a concept that is so ambiguous that we cannot figure out how to measure it. It is only an apparent contradiction, however, and we can try to understand it by looking at the difference between the long term and the short term.

Ethnic flux and change are really long term dynamics that occur over long periods of history, most clearly over a generation or two in the case of many current societies. Many of these other changes that I mentioned occur at momentous points of history, empire building, conquest, slavery, large scale migrations and so on.

At any one point in time and even for fairly long periods of time, ethnicity can become a very firm basis of political organization, mobilization, economic organization and many other divisions in society. Ethnicity can also become the basis of status politics and deference and whole host of other issues with which we are all familiar. To try to make this point more clearly I use several analogies in my paper. Regarding class analysis, we can still have a fair amount of social mobility across generations or periods of history. This does not mean that we do not have sharp class divisions at any one moment of time. Warfare and antagonism between states often occur even though the boundaries between these political states and whatever constitutes these states actually shift over time as well. And to sort of drive the point home I tried to look over a period of history at ethnic classifications to show that we can actually observe these changes taking place. There are two papers here. One is by William Petersen, which has been cited already, on the study of ethnic classification in Hawaii. His study shows that all these political dimensions become clearer if one takes as its scope a century or longer. The other paper is by Charles Hirschman on the ethnic classifications of Malaysia over a period of a hundred and fifty years.

### *Recommendations for Conceptualization and Measurement of Ethnicity*

What is to be done? I now turn to the second part of my paper and because this is now the more important part, let me try to read selective excerpts from it. At the outset I must repeat the obvious. There is no magic bullet. Ethnicity is a multi-dimensional phenomenon with both phenotypical and cultural dimensions. Individuals might have multiple ethnic identities with varied levels of attachment and these identities may or may not be correlated with any objective characteristics. In spite of these problems, I think it is possible to clarify the concepts and to create questionnaire items that will represent these concepts.

There are two dimensions of ethnicity that stand out above all others. One I have labelled as the primary ethnic identity amongst the major ethnic communities in a society. The second is an indicator of an individual's descent or ancestry amongst a broad group of ethnic groups.

Let me try to define each of these concepts and illustrate their measures. The first dimension addresses the question of why ethnicity is important. Ethnicity is important when it has instrumental value or lack of value through an association with political, economic or social factors. If governments or other institutions, social groups or individuals use ethnic criteria to provide rewards or access to scarce resources or to select individuals for participation in formal or informal organizations, then ethnicity matters.



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This dimension is measured logically only in terms of mutually exclusive assignment among a predetermined list of major ethnic groups. For individuals who may have multiple ethnic identities, it is unlikely the policies of inclusion or exclusion can rest upon the ambiguity of joint ethnic membership. The question essentially is, is the person's life chances affected by his or her primary ethnic identity or other peoples' perception of this?

How does one measure this? Well, do the obvious and actually it is very similar to some of the measures that are used, particularly in Canada. The question with which I illustrate this point lists a fixed number of groups (I purposefully do not use the word race and I will come back to that in a moment) and asks, "Which do you consider closest to your primary identity?". If individuals claimed to have multiple ethnic attachments or not one at all, I would have a follow up saying, "Yes, I understand, but is there one group that might best describe how you are seen by others?". The critical part is not the question wording itself but the way in which the list of choices is determined. The concept of major groups must be the selection of groups that are large enough to be visible.

Visibility is not based on physical or cultural dimensions but upon demographic and political criteria. To be a group, it must have some corporate image of itself or be seen by others as a distinct community to be discriminated against or be able to use its own identity as a group as a mechanism for political or economic organization. The list of major ethnic categories will vary in different societies and even in the same time or over the same society. I have some descriptions on how to put this list together.

The second concept is ancestry and this measures the diversity of the population by asking the national or ethnic origins of ancestors. For some people the primary ethnic identity and ancestry will be the same but for many others ancestry will reveal varied ethnic roots which may or may not be related to current identification, cultural attributes or physical features. Ancestry data are very important but quite different from primary ethnic identity. The standard assumption behind the concepts of race and ethnicity is based on the homogeneity of ethnic identity, cultural attributes and other characteristics. However, all the research has shown the opposite. It is important to measure the complexity of ethnic origins and then to measure the overlap of ancestry with one's assignment among these political groups and society and also the association with language, birth place, cultural attributes and the like.

I have a suggested question for ancestry which is a little bit different from the others. Essentially it tries to be as broad as possible. The question I suggest is, "Thinking about your parents, grandparents and your ancestors, what nationalities or ethnic groups are represented in your family's history?". In my opinion, there should not be a limit on the number of responses that a person could give. It might be preferable to rank order them, though I realize in a census this is probably impossible. All of us who deal with data object to multiple responses for a single question, but I think we have to live with the reality that ethnic identity is inherently a

multidimensional variable. It is similar to the measurement of the causes of death. When people die, one often asks for the cause of death. But the scientist who analyzes cause of death realizes that there is a series of "mentions" on the death certificate. Any one of the mentioned causes may have been the final cause that contributed to the death. There are many interdependencies among these. We just have to think about multiple ancestries which is quite different from this classification of ethnic groups in a political community.

Census measures of race and ethnicity originated in an earlier era when assumptions about the biological basis of race distinctions and firm links between cultural characteristics and ethnicity were taken for granted. Because of revised thinking about these assumptions and the need to provide broader measures of ethnicity, new questions have been added to the United States census and that of other countries to identify groups on the basis of identification of ancestry. However, these new measures have, in general, been a disappointment to those who manage the nation's social statistics. The new measures and even the old ones seem to be full of errors and unexpected complexity. Individuals provide answers that are inconsistent and responses seem to vary enormously with slight changes in the structure of the question.

In my opinion, there is little objective basis for the conventional model of ethnic groups as endogamous communities with distinct cultural and phenotypic characteristics. Extensive patterns of ethnic blending in pre-history and the modern world means that there is substantial overlap in ethnic origins and identities in almost every population. Moreover, the social and cultural change over the last century has resulted in very weak ethnic attachments for many persons of multi-ethnic societies. This, however, does not mean that ethnicity is unimportant in the modern world.

Ethnicity is often the primary basis for formal or informal social organization in many multi-ethnic societies. In spite of the vague boundaries and the overlap of ancestry, there are still core constituencies of many ethnic groups. These groups pursue entitlements from economic and political institutions, struggle for the elimination of discrimination and organize internally to maintain solidarity. Many individuals from these groups seek neighbors, employees, friends and spouses from the pool of co-ethnics. To try to clarify this, I am suggesting two categories. The first I entitled primary ethnicity as identification with one of the major ethnic groups in society. Major ethnic groups are defined with sufficient demographic and political presence to affect a person's life chances. By political factors I refer to the institutional or community practices that assist, retard, include or exclude members of a group. Since such practices are group specific, a person can then only have one primary ethnic attachment even though they may have varying degrees of intensity or other secondary attachments. The second dimension, ancestry, refers to the potential diversity of national or ethnic origins of individuals. A person could claim multiple ancestries or none.



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What is left out of these concepts is as important to acknowledge. Perhaps most important is the omission of any reference to the cultural basis of ethnicity. The emphasis here, especially in the first dimension, is on the instrumental aspect of ethnicity. The cultural context of ethnicity may be very important, especially in the main sense of ethnic solidarity. But ethnic groups can persist without a distinct cultural base or at least with a culture that is very similar to that of other populations. Moreover, censuses and national surveys would not seem to be the best method to collect data on cultural patterns or values. The dimension also leaves out many other objective aspects used to identify ethnic groups - birthplace, birthplace of parents, language of origin, language used at home. Rather than use these criteria to define ethnic groups, it seems preferable to measure an association of these characteristics with ethnicity which are defined as subjective characteristics. This approach will allow for the assessment of differences between ethnic groups to be separate from the identification of ethnic groups.

A final word on race. Clearly groups defined on the basis of physical attributes cannot be ignored. While names, dress and even language can be modified, it is all but impossible to change skin color or other physical characteristics that affect the perceptions of ethnic identity. However, I am not convinced that censuses should continue to rely upon a race question which mixes ethnic identity, which is a subjective attribute, with assumptions about physical attributes. There is simply too much heterogeneity within subjectively defined groups. If we need data on physical features, and I believe that we do, it might be useful to try to measure these attributes directly and to maintain the concept of ethnicity as one that we can defend, which is the subjective basis of identity and ancestry.

### **7.3 Discussant's Remarks**

#### **Mary Waters**

I am going to talk about some of the similarities in the experiences of these two countries and then point out one difference. After that, I will talk about what the future might hold and then come back to Professor Hirschman's practical suggestion about how to measure these things.

The first similarity is that both papers very correctly point out that in order to understand what is going to happen in the future we have to look to the past. We have to understand the social history that has brought us to these ethnic and racial divisions and that has shaped how we measure these differences. In a few minutes I will come back to this important point.

The second similarity in the papers is that they point out that statistical agencies do not operate in a vacuum; that, in fact, social science considerations of what's a good question are sometimes only a very small part of what determines the question that is ultimately answered; law, politics and expediency sometimes influence how we collect these important data.



Third, both papers point out that in the two countries ethnicity is a fuzzy, mushy concept with fuzzy boundaries – it is in flux, it changes and it is difficult to capture. This leads to the fourth similarity which is evident in both papers: they both point out that there is a tension between public policy categories, the categories that we need to do the work of government, and the principal of self-enumeration that people don't come in neat categories, people come in blended packages. Politically we need classifications that are mutually exclusive and consistent and that fit the government categories, but those categories are themselves in some ways arbitrary and don't fit the experiences of people.

The one key difference in these papers and in the experiences of the two countries at this moment in time is that Canada and the United States are talking about facing different decisions. In the U.S., as is clear in Professor Hirschman's paper, there is a feeling that the race question, the Hispanic origin question and the ancestry question overlap. Because the underlying concepts we are trying to measure overlap, we are asking people a similar question in a lot of different ways. As a result there is now some movement to rethink the questions and divide these three things up in a way that might make more sense scientifically and politically.

In Professor Hirschman's paper he proposes an origin question that does not make the arbitrary distinction between race and ethnicity. Instead, it makes the distinction between primary identity which addresses public policy and socially important questions and secondary identity which addresses the origin, the ethnic background and the identity that people have. In fact, Hirschman ends his paper by saying that he does not think censuses should continue to rely on a race question which mixes ethnic identity with assumptions about physical attributes.

For Canada, Professor Boyd outlines a situation that is somewhat different. She describes a frustration that has occurred because pressing legislation and public policy, along with the rise of visible minorities, have created a need for precisely the kind of racial data that we collect in the United States. However, Canada constructs those data from an ethnic origin point-of-view; they ask an ethnic origin question and then have to fool around with putting people into the categories that are required for enforcing legislative needs.

It seems that in terms of the traditional census questions that people are re-examining, in some sense we in the United States and Canada are each feeling what's wrong with our own questions and struggling for a better way of asking them. In the process we may be crossing directions in the search to solve this dilemma of self-enumeration and our need for categories.

I would like to return to the first point of both papers and talk about the use of history to understand the future. I believe that it's no accident that Australia, Britain, Canada and the United States are now struggling with how to measure their populations and how to redress and prevent racial discrimination. All of these countries in the 1960s and 1970s opened up

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previously exclusionary immigration policies to non-European groups. They now have growing first- and second-generation immigrant groups who are non-European in origin.

To take the case of the United States with which I am more familiar, the distinction between the Office of Management and Budget-designated minority groups which we measure with the race and Spanish-origin questions and the ancestry groups or ethnic groups which we measure with the ancestry question corresponds roughly with an important historical distinction that the anthropologist John Ogbu describes between voluntary and involuntary groups. Looking at our history, Native Americans were conquered peoples, Blacks were forced migrants as slaves, Puerto Ricans and Chicanos were also conquered on the area that they lived in and Asians were excluded by immigration laws and brought in as contract labourers. As long as there was exclusion of new immigrants at a social distance that was enforced by law in the United States, the categories held up better than they are now as a way of measuring people.

My prediction for the future is that in the United States, with new immigrants and voluntary migrants, the categories will continue to break down. This is because there are fewer separations between the groups and a greater variety of people coming from all over the world with different conceptions of race and their identities. We can already see some of the effects of this in the higher intermarriage rates among the previously designated racial groups in the United States. That has changed in the last 20 years quite dramatically for the Asian and Hispanic groups, more slowly but measurably for Black-White intermarriages. This demographic change which both papers have touched on is part of the reason that we are becoming much less comfortable with how we measure these groups. At the same time we have a legislative need to measure them in the ways that our history has created in order to monitor how well we are trying to change things in our societies.

In closing, I would like to talk about two specific effects that these demographic changes might have on our collection of data. The first, and Professor Boyd touched on this in her conclusion, is that there is going to be a pressing need for academic research. How well our societies are incorporating voluntary non-European groups is going to become a public policy issue. This is going to give a renewed importance of the birthplace of parents question: we will have to separate the ongoing immigrant streams from the experiences of their children as they encounter societies which have traditionally discriminated against people defined in racial ways. For issues from poverty to socio-economic status to legislative programs for counter discrimination it is very important to be able to say what generation people are.

Secondly, the growing ethnic diversity of our non-European groups means that in the United States, however we measure ancestry, whether we change the question or not, or whether we even retain it, we'll find that the question we adopted to measure European-origin groups is going to be used increasingly to measure the diversity of the non-European groups who have been joining our societies. So, the ancestry question, which we tend to debate in terms of



measuring European-origin groups while the other groups are measured in the race and Hispanic-origin questions, is going to be used to talk about the experiences of groups such as Bangladeshi, Ethiopians, Haitians, Nicaraguans, Salvadoreans, Egyptians, Lebanese and other groups which are coming to the United States.

Finally, Professor Hirschman's proposed question is very important and should be considered. With its two steps it is very close to the one that Professor Farley suggested. Both questions are saying, here are the categories that currently matter for public policy purposes, put yourself in one of them – or if you have to, put yourself in two of them – and then tell us about where you are from and what your ancestry is. Both of these questions I like for the important reason that they accept the need for data for political purposes. They do not deny the need for clear data on groups which have been historically discriminated against and are still being discriminated against in our society. At the same time they do not suggest that some groups be measured in one way and other groups be measured in another. In a two-step process people could put themselves into the socially and politically important categories and we could also collect data on their ethnic origins.

In terms of what we will do when we meet again in 2002, if we had collected that type of data, then whatever our societies look like then, we will be able then to say, O.K. these are the groups that we needed because of the situation in the 1990s and these are the new categories that people are putting themselves in. We will then be in a much better position to decide what we want to do in the 2010 U.S. Census, or for Canada the Census of 2006. We will have both how people are reporting themselves and thinking of themselves and where we need to put them for public policy purposes.

## **7.4 Floor Discussion**

Following the discussant's remarks by Mary Waters, the session was opened to questions from the floor and general discussion. A number of issues were raised during the lively debate.

The first centred on the new two-part question proposed by Hirschman and Farley to replace the current race, Hispanic-origin and ancestry items in the U.S. census. While there was general support for rationalizing and simplifying the approaches to race and ethnic measurement, there was some concern that a two-part question would lead to reduced response rates and data reliability in the second part of the item. Farley also raised the question of how the choice of mark-box categories would be determined in Canada. In the U.S. these groups have been established, for public policy purposes, by the Office of Management and Budget; in Canada the choice has usually been based on incidence in the previous census.



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In addition, in spite of the increasing intermarriage between groups and the blending of "races", a considerable number of participants confirmed their continuing need for information on the racial origin of the population. Data on the Hispanic population are also needed for policy purposes. Racial issues in the United States remain a concern and for the foreseeable future data on race and Spanish-origin will be needed to monitor societal discrimination and the effects of government programs and policies.

Several speakers proposed the re-introduction, in both the Canadian and American censuses, of questions on parental birthplace in order to track the integration into North American society of second-generation immigrants. While there was wide-spread support for this recommendation, Isajiw suggested the addition of a third-generation question, birthplace of grandparents.

Multiple responses were discussed in detail. Participants outlined their difficulties in analysing and using data which include multiple responses, especially when no priority has been assigned to them. On the other hand, it was agreed that multiple responses to questions on ethnic origin and ancestry conform to the reality of the diversity of the population in both the United States and Canada. In fact, some concern was expressed about the loss of information when only two multiple write-in responses are coded and retained on the data base.

Conference attendees raised issues of racism and discrimination. One participant questioned whether group differences have a genetic basis. Hirschman said there has been no scientific evidence established. Instead, he stated, group differences are socially determined. People of different racial or ethnic origins are treated differently by society. Some speakers said that by retaining the traditional racial groups the census may be contributing to social polarization. Others, however, confirmed their need for racial or visible minority data.

In the concluding minutes of the conference, Susan Miskura of the Bureau of the Census gave a status report on plans for the year 2000 Census in the U.S.

## 8. *Reports of Rapporteurs*

### 8.1 **Report from Lawrence Bobo** **University of California at Los Angeles**

The rapporteurs' job is certainly a difficult and unenviable one. We have the task of summarizing, criticizing and wrapping up in a pithy way. We have done a good deal of constructive talking, seen a number of presentations, argued with one another and tried to synthesize points. Now, at the end of nearly three days, we face the daunting task of posing the question, what does it mean? Time to come to grips with life, the universe and everything. And as I try to grapple with this task, I thought I'd begin in this very blockheaded way.

We had a few very general objectives that we were given in the letters and phone calls that invited us here. That general charge, really, was to deal with the current and future issues in the measurement of ethnicity, and surely we've done that and done it in a fairly orderly manner. We've dealt with some of the history of the measurement of race and ethnicity in both Canada and the U.S., but, more than that, we've looked at developments in the United Kingdom, Australia, Malaysia and the former Soviet Union, now the Russian Republic. We've dealt at some length with trying to conceptualize ethnicity itself, a task not unlike coming to grips with the Holy Ghost. We've dealt with the data needs that drive census activities for both Statistics Canada and the U.S. Census Bureau. We've dealt a lot with the socio-political environment in which the development, conduct, interpretation and use of any census take place, and we've just completed a fascinating discussion on the future with some fairly concrete and fruitful suggestions and some projections about what lies ahead.

The challenge specifically to the rapporteurs involves these three missions: to identify the major themes and issues that cut across sessions or that were very important or may have been unique to particular sessions; to extract what we could from the recommendations that have been made; and finally, to offer our own impressions and observations, however unique, jaundiced or ill advised they might be.

I will turn to that first set of issues, to identify what I saw as being some of the key themes that emerged in this conference. This may be obvious but I want to underscore it, nonetheless; we have all treated ethnicity as a fundamental factor in human social life. Indeed, in our last session Charles Hirschman told us that ethnicity may be the central political force of the twentieth century. The eminent Black sociologist, W.E.B. DuBois, noted at the opening of this century that the color line would be the problem of the twentieth century. Many of our opening presentations noted events in Europe, the Middle East, the former Soviet Union and how they were shaping and reshaping the social and political world. Dr. Barbara Bryant opened by telling us that, despite the fine and seemingly sensible initial predictions of Robert Park, we do not have a melting-pot, but rather a mosaic, an ethnic mosaic that isn't entirely collapsing, disappearing, becoming uniform or uniethnic. In addition, Ivan P. Fellegi talked about a series of recent

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developments in Canada dealing with multicultural legislation, anti-discrimination legislation, ongoing constitutional debate and the obvious institutionalization of two official languages. Both of these countries are clearly wrestling with problems of ethnicity: how do we deal with discrimination, how do we reduce inequality between groups and how might we go about encouraging greater mutual tolerance and respect? In short, people define themselves, orient themselves to one another, order their own lives and daily activities and relationships often in terms of their ethnic groups' identities and attachments.

I want to add, however, that this new acknowledgement of the centrality of ethnicity is a profound repudiation of a long-standing conventional wisdom. Yet, we've all operated as though it is something that should now be taken for granted. I pose the question here: could Marx, Durkheim or even Weber sleep comfortably in light of the modern potency of ethnicity? Obviously not. They are rolling, perhaps in shame, in their graves for having missed what was to come, and perhaps most potently in the case of Marx, this is true. And I quote from Professor Cohen's fine paper that says fortunately or unfortunately, depending on your viewpoint, recent events indicate that ethnicity can not be dismissed as some kind of retrograde obstruction or the reflection of a deeper reality, such as economic inequality or the class struggle. Rather, ethnicity seems to be a phenomenon that seems inherent in the human experience. Marx was wrong. We don't progress beyond "ethnicity." We apparently can't even move forward without it.

I think it's fair to say that neither Durkheim or even Weber, who was principally preoccupied with other issues, did much better. Nor did general economic theories or theories of modernization — which also, implicitly and sometimes explicitly, forecast that technological and economic developments would gradually undo atavistic primordial attachments to race, ethnicity, tribe and caste. This raises a deeper issue, and we need to be more self-conscious about this change in basic assumptions about the intrinsic importance of ethnicity. Ethnicity and ethnic group attachments have become fundamental to human social relationships.

As the Petersen article<sup>1</sup> noted, assimilation is not likely to be a one-way process. Let's think about Southern, Northern and Western European immigrants to the U.S. who appear, on many objective indicators of status, to be increasingly melting. However, what may often appear to be the disappearance of ethnicity could, in fact, be the basis for the emergence of a new ethnicity, the unhyphenated American or, at some point down the road, the Euro-American. This identity is increasingly being defined in an anti-multiculturalism or anti-diversity movement on college campuses that is articulated in terms of a Euro-American identity. The clear and symbolic embodiment of this movement is now Pat Buchanan. He is unsuccessful for the moment but don't count him out.

This persistence is not just cultural in nature, it's not just people searching for roots to fulfil, perhaps, some momentary psychological need or interest. As the Petersen article and Charles



Hirschman's recent presentation stressed, these identities get socially organized and, in particular, they get linked to statuses, to access to resources and to the quality of life that individuals are likely to experience or be able to obtain. But I would push it even further. There is an issue that hasn't been introduced here, perhaps since we don't have many psychologists or social psychologists present. There is an increasing tendency within social psychological research to believe that human beings have a remarkable facility, perhaps an intrinsic capacity, to form group attachments; exactly what those attachments will be are highly variable across situations and over time. But rest assured, people will form group ties and they do it quickly. Once it is done, it rather easily becomes a basis, unfortunately, for some in-group favoritism, if not also a degree of out-group discrimination and hostility. We seem to have a need, in short, to create we/they distinctions. The fundamental point is that we/they distinctions become tied to sense of self-worth, to place, to rootedness and to the fundamental basis of identity.

The practical implication for us here today and for those wrestling with issues like ethnicity in the census is: just count on it being there. It will assert itself, reassert itself or reshape itself in the human experience. It simply makes no sense to think that ethnicity is going to wane to the point of vanishing; human experience to this point, indeed, much of the empirical data collected over the last 40 years, tells us that to think otherwise would just be a boneheaded conclusion.

Let me talk for a moment about Professor Cohen's paper, which I thought quite interesting and provocative in this regard. He noted that virtually all known states have been multiethnic and that, perhaps even more important, states were not founded merely out of economic, political, military or technological imperatives, but also through an irreducibly ethnic imperative. The very process of developing complex, differentiated, stable human social systems springs in part or encourages ethnic differentiation and ethnic stratification. He wrote that in many, probably the majority of instances, the emergence of states involves numerous ethnic groups, variably related to one another but invariably ranked. This, of course, may have some discouraging implications about the inability to ever fully uproot inequality and discrimination across group lines, but it also tells us, it forewarns us, to keep our eyes on the ball.

Now, there is a dilemma for us. We have this bedrock faith or conviction that ethnicity matters; at the same time, we would generally agree that adequate conceptional definition of ethnicity is an elusive thing. Indeed, none of us were able to fix on some final definition. Professor Isajiw's paper, for example, identified four distinct paradigms: primordial, phenomenal, situational and subjective. They ran the gamut from seeing ethnicity as being just deeply rooted in human nature to subjective, social and constructed to epiphenomenal or rooted in the economic organization of society. An earlier 1974 paper identified no less than 27 definitions and 12 different attributes. Thernstrom, Handlin and Orlov identify 14 different features. The current paper by Professor Isajiw had at least 12 analytical distinctions that distinguished ethnic

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group from ethnic identity, primary from secondary identity, young groups from older groups, nationality groups from folk communities, majority groups from minorities, single versus multiple identities, and on and on and on. And perhaps the simplest, shortest embodiment of this was the results of our working groups' task to define race, ethnicity and so on. Not a one of them came back with even an effort to wrestle with that particular question.

We have a hard time defining ethnicity. Nonetheless, we do have some ideas that we have come to work with. Ethnicity is surely social and socially constructed. It has a number of objective dimensions that should be underlined. These include language, the social networks of interaction that people are involved with and the institutions and associations that people form. That is, are people involved in some distinct ethnic church or religion, ethnic group voluntary associations, various functions and events that may have some clear-cut ethnic character? But we would also think of those things that have typically been thought of as making up race, color or other physical features as going into defining an ethnicity. Most of us would not regard these as problematic conclusions.

Then lastly, there was the set of subjective elements involved with ethnicity. Again, drawing on Professor Isajiw's paper, ethnicity has a socialization component, that is, the within-group aspect of how we pick up identities from parents, peers and our close associates. There is also a relational aspect or between-group interaction, which others impose on us or project upon us or potentially even accept from us. This results in a multifaceted sense of ethnic identity that involves the cognitive development of some basic ideas about what people like me are like, some sense of moral tie or obligation to the group, commitment, common faith and so on, and then an affective attachment or some emotional bonding to other members of the category. And, of course, this is not exhaustive in any sense and, perhaps more importantly, it goes beyond anything that a census, per se, might do. It is to just underscore the idea that we probably all do attempt some provisional definition of ethnicity. These are many of the ideas that can be invoked in a somewhat conceptual manner even though we are never going to land upon an exact wording that we can all accept.

And now we get to the really hard part and this I call the Holy Grail: standardized ethnic measurement, something that we will have a long crusade over. It varies from country to country, as was emphasized in the recent session on the future measurement prospects. Several speakers emphasized that there are particular national histories and experiences that determine the categories and the meanings of the categories. Even within a particular state system, it's going to vary over time because of the way that different types of immigration streams affect the makeup of a population. Ethnicity will also vary for political reasons as new identities are shaped or get tied to different movements, and it will vary due to the blending, the intermixing, the intermarriage that may happen in a society. As a result, a common theme of these meetings has been that we are unlikely to find a uniform scheme. We may not even find some generally



acceptable broad formula that says this is how you go about finding out the relevant scheme in a particular context.

But let me push the point further and begin to invoke some of Lieberman's Devilish Principles (LDPs). The Lieberman's Devilish Principle that we will invoke as a way of elaborating is this notion of standard ethnic measurement as the Holy Grail. He said — I call it LDP #2 — that there really is an inherent clash of needs between the census and the underlying nature of ethnicity. The census wants and needs constancy for many purposes, but we recognize that the underlying ethnic phenomenon is very much in flux, perhaps constant flux. The census wants clarity, wants individuals to report a single clear-cut ancestry or racial category, but we know that people often have multiple ancestries or want to identify with a mixed race category or express varying degrees of commitment or attachment to different categories.

I heard it mentioned in one of the working groups, and later I think here today, that censuses are, or at least ought to be, conservative things. They ought to change slowly, if at all. In a sense, a census should reflect the prevailing consensus about what the relevant categories are, not this month's or this year's or the next two years' fad in terms of group identification or group categories. So there is going to be constant tension between the intrinsic needs and wants of a census-type enterprise and the underlying nature and complexity of the ethnic world.

A third Lieberman Devilish Principle here is the subjectivity of ethnicity, the attitudinal component. Even some features of ethnicity that we like to think or assume are objective, like ancestry, may be elusive. People may not have the information or be able to report it to us accurately. They may not be willing to report accurately, as witnessed by the example of the increasing reporting of Dutch background by Germans around the time of World War II, or they may consider one aspect of their ancestry more important than another and therefore emphasize that in their reporting. As Mary Waters' book has pointed out, there are all sorts of criteria people might draw on in making such judgements. Is it the family surname that matters? Is my father's background more important than my mother's? Do I just want not to be plain vanilla and pick the background that's jazziest, whatever it happens to be? In the end, there may be some socially emergent construction despite our efforts to make it dry, factual, categorical. And the last point here is that a lot of this ambiguity is in the end meaningful. As Howard Schuman once put it in the title of a paper, the facts are in the eye of the beholder. Errors are often not random, they are systematic but they are systematic in ways that are informative about the nature of ethnicity, about how people want to think about themselves and about how they may be experiencing the social world. From the standpoint of some particular programmatic needs or counting purposes it can be an error or a misreading of the question, but it also tells us something about how people are thinking, feeling and behaving. So much for the Holy Grail.

Everything is political. Increasing social conflicts over the census is the fourth theme that runs throughout the conference. Professor Kobayashi's paper summarized it well when she wrote that



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defining ethnocultural group is more than an exercise in definitional consistency. The attempt to do so as analytical categories inevitably requires making political and ideological choices. In both the Canada and U.S. papers on the development of the recent census ethnicity and race measures, there were examples of politics influencing the basic categories that were finally adopted. In some instances the influence came very near the last minute and produced a largely untested form despite seven years of development. Now you have this new Asian and Pacific Islander set of measures to include, for example. But we can look back and find other instances such as the historical decision in Canada, following World War II, to stop using the word "race" or the pressure to include a Hispanic-origin question in the U.S.

We know that politics and the census get connected in potentially explosive ways. The census is tied to too many important resources for that not to be the case. It's linked to political redistricting and who is going to get what type of political representation, access and influence. It will, therefore, be tied to the delivery of any number of resources such as welfare benefits, health services and the like. It's clearly linked to combatting discrimination and assessments of where strong intervention is needed. It can even be linked to school curricula and financing, so all this clearly matters.

And again, not to lose sight of where we started, let's invoke some LDPs. LDP #5 is that, in the U.S. and possibly in Canada, dominant group control over census categories appears to be weakening. The majority dominant group can't simply say these are the categories in which we are interested. There are different groups, minority groups in the population, actively contending, bringing pressure to bear to see "we" are included and represented in ways that serve our interests and that's inevitably directly politicizing the process. Remember, everything was political to begin with, but now it's more of an open political struggle.

Point six here, LDP #6, is that all claimants are morally righteous. The quotes in Leo Estrada's paper help communicate some of that feeling, that effect, that sense of worth and identity in group membership that gets involved in what official government counts of "us" produce or imply. And now let me turn expressly to what I am going to call the Estrada Scenario. What has happened is that the census has become increasingly tied to larger ongoing group political struggles. If there is a theme that linked the forecasts that Leo was making, this is it: the fight is getting more intense, particularly in the U.S. and maybe in the future in Canada. The nature of that fight over how society's resources get distributed among groups is going to have reverberations and consequences for what the census is allowed to measure and report; this is the bottom line. In the forecast Estrada notes we are likely to see a de-emphasis on race and Hispanic origin in favor of reports of ancestry. And not for the high minded reasons cited by Charles Hirschman or the specific needs indicated by Reynolds Farley's measure, but for the political reason of muting demands of group entitlements. It's largely a political struggle over minority empowerment, affirmative action and who is entitled to what resources.

Estrada noted, secondly, that there will be growing attention to immigration and citizenship. Mary Waters very much agreed with this and I think that there would have been very little debate between the two over the reasons for that. The third forecast is that access to data will become more of a contentious issue as the gap grows between the "data haves" and the "data have nots." And lastly, the forecast that the year 2000 Census will be far and away the most contentious census ever. The implications of these forecasts are that the political uses and effects of ethnicity data seem to be opening the door to political efforts to suppress or control or constrain the use of that information. That's likely to occasion a more intense struggle and this struggle is rife with implications for the content of the census, as well as for dissemination and the use of the census. There are further and even more profound implications for the basic success of the census, that is, the prospects for cooperation from many of those communities that it is seeking to enumerate. The practical upshot is that planners of the census need to be acutely sensitive to changes in the political environment that can create a more super-heated atmosphere than may have existed at any previous point.

So much for theme #4, let's move to theme #5. Having said all that about politics, nonetheless you can't please everyone and that was a strong theme that came out of our working groups on data needs. Or to begin by invoking another of Lieberman's Devilish Principles, there are severe constraints on how much questionnaire space can be devoted to a topic like ethnicity. The more you want to do with ethnicity, the greater depth in which you want to pursue this, the more likely you are to have to give up on some information about occupation or income or something like that. There are real upper limits on what one can attempt to do.

In addition, the principal client in this case really is government. Almost of necessity this dictates that race and ethnicity measures are going to be a compromise of science, the practical needs of census takers and the politics that are prevailing at the moment. To be sure, there must always be consultation with the groups involved, there should be consultation with the user communities and there should be consultation in particular with researchers who have generated a wealth of information on these questions. But I took to heart, as I listened to many of those who are working on the U.S. census, the Canadian census, the British census and so on that their principal client is government. They have federal mandates to serve, program needs to meet and these demands take priority over a lot of the social science points of curiosity.

That summarizes the core themes of the conference. I also wanted to draw out some implications. If you were to look at the themes and how I've packaged them you could come up with a very pessimistic forecast. On the one hand, we know that ethnicity is a subject of incredible importance. At the same time, despite years of investigation and effort, we can't come up with a sharply delineated definition of this thing called "ethnicity." It's fuzzy, it's got unclear boundaries, it's got variable measurement and we can't come up with any measure that is in any sense fully standard. We have to concede that what we've got is a snapshot, a reconciliation of technology and politics, that seems to make the most sense at a particular



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moment. And we have serious constraints on what it is feasible to do. To elaborate further, political struggle is seeping more and more into what the census does. But I don't come away from this meeting feeling pessimistic at all. Quite frankly, I'm optimistic that despite many problems we seem to be doing a first-rate job of adapting to the phenomenon at hand, not that there isn't still room for improvement and plenty of work to do.

Much like pornography, when I see ethnicity I know it. I tried to ask people from different countries how they felt about the job they were doing. Most of them said they were satisfied, they had gone through a long deliberate process to get to the measures they had. They knew there were weaknesses but there was still a long deliberate research process at work to try to come to grips with those problems. They knew they were clearly using somewhat blunt instruments to characterize the underlying social world, but were probably doing no violent damage to the underlying social realities with the categories that had been developed and they were tapping into a good deal of tremendously important information. The ambiguities in much of the data are often instructive; they are not intrinsically disabling and they also give us information about the underlying social world. The very existence of this conference testifies that we are explicitly aware of the need to continue adapting and doing research. So I tend to end up far more on the optimistic side than the pessimistic side.

Let's talk a minute about the recommendations that came up. I've categorized them by people rather than by any conceptual linkages among them. Farley gave us four sets of possibilities. He noted that the census has long been engaged in programs of pretesting and examination and that what we need to do now is to experiment with different questions. If questions are politically problematic, like the one he proposes, the way to launch the study is to say here are five different ways of doing it, we aren't yet fixed on one. That way you don't have quite the hot potato that you do when you say here is our new race question. Instead, you've got five possibilities, one of which should clearly include what's been done in the past. Secondly, he suggested experimenting with treating Hispanic or Latino as a racial category, not merely as an origin. He also noted that one should develop an item or his specific proposal for merging race and ancestry. Lastly he recommended a return to measuring parental ancestry.

Stanley Lieberson made a somewhat bolder recommendation, that is, to have experimental balance or forms of the census itself, that the census itself involve several different measurement approaches. Then, most recently, we had Charles Hirschman's recommendation to move toward a two-pronged approach, to try to identify a primary ethnicity based on demographically and politically meaningful ethnic groupings and to follow that up with an ancestry question. My first reaction is to see this as extremely promising; I quibble a lot with the wording of the specific questions, but that's not worth doing here. However, I do truly pity whoever it is who must define those categories.



Do we need a mixed race category? I come from California, I teach a lot of courses that have mixed race students in them and I am struck by the degree to which they really do have dual identities. They may think that others perceive them more in terms of one category than another, but in their heart of hearts, they would like to be understood as people with two sets of backgrounds. I think we will be under increasing pressure to adapt to some type of mixed race category: not just a box to tick off "mixed race," but to specify what that mixture is. Because this is part of the flux, this is part of the change, the indeterminacy that is coming and we need to be planning now to adapt to it.

There has been some suggestion that the notion of race should be abandoned entirely. We've had a fairly good airing of the issues at stake there so I won't go back to it. There was a very provocative suggestion that Statistics Canada and the U.S. Census Bureau need to collaborate to better enumerate First Nations people, the aboriginal or Native American populations across the two countries.

Lastly, there was the prospect of measuring ethnic intensity, which falters on the ground of severe time limitations. It's an important idea and there are more objective ways of asking about the intensity of that attachment that wouldn't raise the political or social problems that a subjective question on intensity would arouse. It would really do a lot to pin down the meaningfulness of particular ethnic attachments. So that is worth bearing in mind as well. Those were the recommendations as I saw them.

I am reminded of Lieberman's Devilish Principle #1, the complexity of ethnicity has and always will be with us. Things change, we have got our very fuzzy definitions but at least we are forewarned and substantially forearmed as a result. Secondly, we do indeed have to grapple with ethnicity, however imperfectly contingent and incremental our efforts.

There is a point here which I wanted to make. It's my own suggestion about how research ought to proceed. There is a continuum along which we could be thinking. We could be thinking in terms of dealing with technological errors and fixes or with coming to grips with the intrinsic malleability of ethnicity. I think our traditional focus — as indicated, for example, in the McKenney-Cresce paper that describes this very elaborate effort to develop the 1990 Census formula — was really one of how do we make this question work better, communicate our meaning to respondents, get the nonresponse down, get people accurately into categories. It was really more of a technical fix approach. One of the implications of our conference is that we ought to be moving more in the direction of coming to grips with the intrinsic malleability of ethnicity because we are about to enter a period of extraordinarily rapid change in both Canada and the U.S. Simply working to tinker with a machine you know has problems is not enough. We need something a little more than that. I think, in particular, of focusing some experimental efforts on interesting places such as New York and Miami, where you know there is an incredible ethnic heterogeneity and blending going on. Let's try to find out what new identities

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are taking shape there, or in places like upstate New York where a lot of the blending of the old traditional White ethnics has gone on, as discussed in Alba's new book. Is there a new ethnicity emerging for them? We should really focus on these new ethnicities, so that is the point I had in mind, ethnicities. We need to do more than make a question work. We need to push towards capturing the underlying phenomenon a little more than we have. Like everyone else here I've greatly enjoyed this undertaking. It was extraordinarily stimulating, I've enjoyed listening, exchanging and interacting with everyone.

### **8.2 Report from Teresa A. Sullivan University of Texas**

Professor Monica Boyd initiated the metaphor of the Starship *Enterprise* but even in star date 2492 issues of ethnicity will not be solved. Recall our endless speculation about Mr. Spock's Vulcan identity, given his mixed parentage. And although Counsellor Troi seems undoubtedly Betazoid, despite having a human parent, doubts remain as to whether Lieutenant Worf can be considered a true Klingon. Worf is genetically Klingon but he was raised by human adoptive parents so his cultural identity is ambiguous. Ethnic (or species) identity seems to be very much with us in that fictitious future.

Ethnicity revolves ultimately about the messy, thorny but fascinating and pivotal issue of who we are. For several days we have discussed the enormous ambiguities encountered when respondents answer the question, "Who are you?". Social psychologists administer the "Who am I" scale, which respondents complete by answering a number of identical items that begin "I am \_\_\_\_". By looking at the way respondents fill in those items, the analysts learn which identities are salient to the respondents. When we conduct a census, we perform a similar exercise except that census forms constrain the response categories.

Ethnicity as it exists "out there" is continuous, multidimensional and historically bound. The process of measurement for censuses, vital statistics or sample surveys requires analysts to reduce empirical reality to something discrete, minimally dimensioned and current. I want to discuss each of these dimensions in turn.

#### ***Continuous***

First is the notion that ethnicity is continuous. As Professor Cohen pointed out very articulately, there is a continuous process of identification, one that continues on our continent 250 to 300 years after its settlement by various Europeans. Through immigration, the process continues to this day. Whole groups of people, and individuals within those groups, are always rethinking and redefining the answers to the questions, "Who am I? Who are we?". Ethnic identification is also, as Professor Goldscheider pointed out, a process that goes on through the life cycle.



We are not well aware of how people's definitions of their ethnicity may change as they age. The Japanese-American girl whom Professor Hirschman discussed this morning may find that she changes her identity several times during her lifetime. Studies have shown that many putative centenarians actually aged more than 10 years during some intercensal decades. Perhaps if we studied successive returns from some census respondents, we would also find that they had recruited themselves into new ethnic identities over time.

Gender affects ethnic identification, a fact to which Professor Kobayashi alluded. In some cases ethnicity was ascribed by definitional rules imposed by others. Pamela White and her co-authors note, for example, that at one time ethnic identity in Canada was defined paternally. Galina Bondarskaya indicated that in Russia ethnicity was often determined maternally. Almost surely marriage and subsequent remarriage affect one's ethnic identity and the effect may be greater for women who change their surnames upon marriage. Finally, Professor Hirschman reminds us that there is ethnic mobility, that whole groups may break off and re-identify themselves, or they may move back and forth depending upon how their other circumstances are changing.

### *Multidimensional*

Several papers have demonstrated for us how multidimensional ethnicity is. Some dimensions we discussed include religion, which both Canada and Malaysia make an effort to measure but which the United States, for constitutional reasons, does not. Interestingly, although most of the countries here do measure language, at least the concept of mother tongue, speakers from both Canada and the United States seemed to avoid talking about it. Malaysia uses language in defining ethnicity.

Several authors alluded to a vertical or social class dimension of ethnicity. I was glad that Professor Bryce-Laporte mentioned Brazil. The Brazilian census asks about color which is precoded as Black, Brown or White. The Brazilians have an expression: "Money whitens". Professor Charles Wood, from the University of Florida, has shown by comparing the 1950 with the 1980 census of Brazil that there is a large out-migration from the Black self-reported category into the Brown and White categories. One of my colleagues, who was recently in Sao Paulo, asked his taxi driver, "That man on the corner there — what is his race?". The taxi driver said, "Oh, he's White now, he used to be Black". That man on the street had become economically successful, hence the expression "Money whitens". We don't really know whether some similar phenomenon occurs in the United States and Canada. The census must reduce some of the multidimensional complexity of ethnicity to minimal dimensions to code and present them.



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### *Historically bounded*

Finally we come to the historical aspect. Pamela White and her coauthors refer to multistage migration. An example would be immigrants to Canada from the Caribbean who perhaps had their origins in countries beyond the Caribbean. Multistage migration may confuse the reporting of ethnicity, especially given the prevalence of refugee movements around the world, many of which involve several stages of first and second asylum. Both Canada and the United States will have experienced continued refugee migration, along with the complexities it develops in terms of ethnicity. Moreover, minority groups within other countries may be more likely to migrate than the majority groups within those countries. Both in the United States and Canada we have seen the migration of such groups – for example, recent migrations of Russian Jews or of Chinese from Vietnam. Both groups were minorities in their home country and experienced conflicts about their ethnic identity even there.

### *Resolving Complexity*

The basic measurement question is how to reduce this empirical complexity. How best do we develop a discrete, minimally dimensioned and current set of identifiers? Three methods have been discussed here: government definition, community definition and self-identification.

One approach to definition is to have the government promulgate an official definition. Of the countries represented here, Malaysia perhaps comes closest in having a constitutional definition of who is Malay. Although we have had a history of official definition in the United States, we have moved decisively away from it since the Supreme Court decided *Plessey v. Ferguson* in 1896. This suit was originally over whether an "octaroon" could occupy a White railroad car; under Louisiana law, an octaroon was defined as a person with one-eighth Black ancestry (i.e. one Black great-grandparent). The whole complex process of official government definition has largely been abandoned in the United States.

A second form of identification is by the community, either in terms of having the community identify or having the community accept a person as being one of them. This technique was once used in censuses in both Canada and the United States when enumerators tried to estimate how a person's race or ethnicity would be perceived within the community. Community definition encounters many issues. One issue is the ambiguity of emergent ethnic groups and their community identification. I was glad that Professor Cohen talked about the difficulty of someone who is in Texas. Texan is probably one of the emergent ethnicities of the United States. Large countries generate their own internal ethnic groups even without continued immigration.

Finally, many of our countries have settled on self-identification as the most appropriate method of identification. Even with self-identification there are different measures of ethnicity that can

be developed. We spent a fair amount of time at this conference talking about race, origin, ethnicity and ancestry. We spent less time discussing either birthplace or language, although both are also aspects of self-identification.

### *Self-identification and data filtering*

If self-identification is the principal means of measurement, we should consider what compromises self-identification. Inevitably census procedures filter the raw data on ethnicity and some census practices and procedures have the potential to compromise self-identification.

Multiple identities and emergent groups are two issues we have discussed at length. Raw self-identification data will routinely contain information from respondents who report more than one identity. Numerous conference participants have alluded to the statistical problems of dealing with multiple identifiers but in the real world of people we try to enumerate multiple identities frequently occur. A related problem is emergent groups. I found it interesting here that I could be enumerated as an American if I were in the Canadian or Australian censuses but not in the United States census. In effect, the census censors certain identities as inappropriate.

Self-identification is potentially compromised by confidentiality regulations. If a group is so small that they can be uniquely identified or its members could be uniquely identified on their block or census tract, than their ethnicity may have to be suppressed for reasons of confidentiality. Census bureaus have to decide the relative priority of confidentiality versus ethnic identity for small groups.

Procedures such as allocation, imputation and editing also have the potential to compromise self-identification. Suppose that we have someone who does not answer the question about ancestry or ethnicity – perhaps for ideological reasons, perhaps because of confusion about one's ancestry, or for some other reason. Suppose Lieutenant Worf is asked, "What is your race?". Lieutenant Worf does not wish to answer because he doesn't see Klingon as one of the possibilities. Once that census form has come into the field office, someone on the field editing staff will call to inquire about the missing answer. If Lieutenant Worf is off in space and unable to answer the telephone, eventually his ancestry will be allocated. Someone will complete the racial code on his form. This is sometimes expressed colloquially in the United States as "The Census Bureau will make up the data".

Imputing goes a step further. Imputing occurs when census staff have reason to believe that an apparently unoccupied unit, or at least an unenumerated unit, has occupants. The census staff make every effort to find out information about these occupants, even to the extent of consulting with nearby neighbors. Eventually some characteristics are assigned to that housing unit.

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Perhaps the master issue is coding which really is the first filter I mentioned. Coding is the process of reducing what respondents actually say their ancestry is to some set of limited, manageable codes. The editing process changes what people actually write. A related filter is involved in the coding category that is actually reported. Census bureaus cannot report 630 categories of ancestry, even though that might be the number of codes that have been developed. Those 630 codes must be placed into what Pamela White called "roll-up categories", a wonderfully descriptive phrase. Roll-up categories combine a large number of separately identified groups.

Each of these processes involves some compromise with the basic principle of self-identification. If Professor Estrada is right that the 2000 Census will be litigated, the compromises with self-identification comprise one set of grounds for the litigation. We don't really have self-identification, one could argue, we have self-identification plus: self-identification plus coding plus allocation plus imputation and so on.

A final filter is data publication. Mention has been made here about the "data haves" and the "data have-nots". Small or uninfluential groups have a problem if they are forced to rely upon either summary files or upon publications of census bureaus for information about their group. They become data have-nots. I am more optimistic than most speakers I have heard today about access in the year 2000 because the provision of data on CD-ROM and other relatively inexpensive media offer great possibilities of democratizing data. With CD-ROM, small groups have the possibility for the first time of processing microdata without a mainframe computer, without having to read and analyze 30 or 40 magnetic tapes. Many groups that previously could not afford unpublished tabulations will now be able to do their own tabulations. Possibly this potential will help with the cost-recovery problem in Canada.

## *Other Issues*

I want to mention some things that were in the shadows of the conference. They are not recommendations but rather whispers, ideas, things that we heard out in the hallways but ideas that might eventually make a difference in measuring ethnicity.

At least in the United States, if not in Canada, declining literacy poses problems for the ethnicity question. Many Americans do not understand the wording of the questions that are currently asked. Analysis of the 1980 Census indicated that many of the putative Mexican-Americans in South Carolina and Mississippi — a group who hadn't been seen there in 1970 — turned out to be people with relatively low levels of schooling who misunderstood the question. Any questionnaire for the year 2000 needs considerable pretesting on people with low levels of education to see if they can understand the items that are being presented.



Susan McDaniel talked about the possibility of multisample design. There is also the possibility – to which Professor Lieberman alluded – for randomized ethnicity examples with a multisample design. The data that we saw in the paper by Nampeo McKenney and Arthur Cresce showed that the examples of ancestry presented in the questionnaire influenced the answers. The enormous increase in Cajun population, for example, might have come about because the inclusion of "Cajun" as an example legitimated that answer as a response. One possibility would be to use different lists on different forms; on some forms one might read Nigerian, French and Thai and on others one might read Cajun, German, Brazilian and so on. Such a procedure might not influence the answers as much – or at any rate, it might randomize the response error.

In 1990 the U.S. Census Bureau commissioned many field and ethnographic studies concerning differential undercount. For the year 2000, it might be useful to consider field studies around the issue of "Why did you answer this question the way you answered it?"; "Why is that you called yourself a \_\_\_\_\_?" Such studies could be helpful in understanding the process of identification, particularly with emergent groups. We've talked a lot about the census bureaus dialoguing with their constituent communities, stake holders, user communities and so on. One of the problems with the constitution of the current census advisory groups, however, is that only the already recognized groups are represented. Someone from an emergent group has less opportunity to express a view. Possibly census bureaus might consider floating representation for groups such as new immigrants, persons of mixed ancestry and so on. Professor Hirschman emphasized the the fruitfulness of looking at error and the significance of developmental work on error. Ethnicity "errors" may reveal a great deal about ethnicity. Consider, for example, studying the inconsistent responses of immigrants from a country in which they held a minority position or spoke a minority language. One piece of evidence for such developmental work is the language in which the census questionnaire was completed. Linguistic analysis of the connotative differences between translations may reveal differences in the interpretation of the ancestry question in, let us say, the English and the Spanish questionnaires.

Development work needs raw data. Most data products from census bureaus are not really raw data; they have been partially cooked. By partially cooked I mean they have already been edited, nonresponses have been removed and what in the survey world would be called missing data have been allocated or eliminated. Many researchers could profit from analyzing something closer to raw data, rather in the way they now do with survey data. On survey questionnaires, for example, there are often a large number of nonresponses to questions like race or ancestry. We do not see that with census data because of the procedures of editing and allocation but it might be interesting to examine such "errors" with the raw data.

Most census bureaus do post-enumeration surveys, principally to look at issues of coverage but also to look at issues of reliability. The post-enumeration survey is a wonderful opportunity to pay particular attention to the reliability of the ethnicity identification and to the correctness of any subsequent allocation or editing that was done. It would be very useful to follow back a

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PES subsample of the people for whom ethnicity had been edited or allocated and to estimate the correctness of the allocations.

Finally, the possibility of agnosticism has to be addressed. Many people do not answer the questions because they do not know how or because they refuse to answer. As we move farther away from the great European migrations of the late 1800s, many North Americans become less able to trace their ancestry or as far as they can trace it their ancestry is native-born. The ancestry question may become increasingly difficult to answer or they may prefer not to answer it. In the interest of honesty, perhaps census bureaus should now put a little warning over those questions: "If you do not choose to answer, an answer will be assigned to you". This is a special case of the more general issue of citizen dissent from a required census. In all the countries represented here, citizens are required by law to complete the census and yet they are not given the opportunity to excuse themselves from questions that they find to be difficult, awkward, offensive or whatever. If they cannot excuse themselves, then they should be told that the assignment of data will result.

There has been a great deal of discussion about what kinds of technologies would be used in the year 2000 Census besides the standard paper and pencil format with mail-out and mail-back procedures. The question Professor Farley proposed was ideally situated for a computerized format in which respondents answer within one of the basic five groups of categories and then they are automatically fed additional possibilities with the opportunity perhaps to write in another one. Professor Choldin liked Professor Farley's question and it deserves some experimentation.

The proposed question has a couple of attractive features. First, the Farley question provides a motivation for filling out the question by naming groups which public policy has identified as being important. Far from the census bureau being nosy or probing into citizens' lives, the bureau has a reason for asking to which of these groups you feel you belong. Moreover, this question offers an appealing way to avoid the offensive category of race which really bothers a great number of people.

Finally, this experience of bringing together the census personnel of these two countries has been a great experience and I feel privileged to have been part of it. The idea of a joint Canadian-U.S. survey of Native American populations or First Nation people is an interesting notion that responds to some of the true ambiguities about residential location. Some such effort between the two countries would be a useful follow-up to this conference. Although our two countries differ in many striking ways, the significance of ethnicity is similar in both countries and nothing in this conference suggests that that significance will diminish before 2000--nor, indeed, between now and the year 2100. Further cooperation between the bureaus would be of great benefit to both countries. This has been a wonderful experience for me and I thank you for this opportunity to share my reflections with you.

**Note**

1. William Petersen, "Concepts of Ethnicity," *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980), p. 234-242.





# Part II





# National Experiences



# *Measurement of Ethnicity in the United States: Experiences of the U.S. Census Bureau*

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## **Introduction**

### **Scope of Paper**

This paper presents experiences of the United States Bureau of the Census in collecting data on ethnicity in its decennial censuses. The Census Bureau used three items — race, Spanish/Hispanic origin and ancestry — to obtain information on the ethnicity of the population in the 1990 Census. We will discuss: 1) the 1990 questions on ethnicity and provide a brief history of each one; 2) the various factors that affected the development of these questions; 3) evaluation of data derived from ethnic questions; 4) how census ethnic questions relate to concepts of ethnicity; and 5) issues that must be addressed as the Bureau attempts to meet the demand for ethnic data in the future.

As we address issues involving the concept of ethnicity, the impact of data needs and socio-political factors on question development, as well as future approaches to ethnic questions, we are mindful that other experts at this conference will address these issues in more depth. Our goal is to share our experiences using these questions and provide an adequate discussion of the above-mentioned issues to give background for papers to be delivered at later sessions of this conference.

### **Ethnic-related Questions used in the 1990 Census**

The 1990 Census included five ethnic-related questions — the three direct questions on race, Hispanic origin and ancestry; plus place of birth of the individual and current language. This paper focuses on race, Hispanic origin and ancestry since most governmental and private data users currently use these items as the primary identifiers of ethnicity. The 1990 Census asked the race and Hispanic questions of all persons and the ancestry question of a sample of the population.

Since the earliest censuses of the United States, the Bureau of the Census has treated race and ethnicity as two separate concepts. This approach has provided the most complete set of data to meet a wide diversity of data needs. The Bureau does recognize, however, that concepts are



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not mutually exclusive and do overlap. The race question is used to divide the population into the following categories – White, Black, American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian and Pacific Islander and Other race. The Hispanic origin and ancestry questions, considered as the primary "ethnic" inquiries, provide information on groups with Spanish/Hispanic ancestry and on an extensive array of groups such as English, Polish, Lebanese and Jamaican, respectively. Figure 1 shows the racial and ethnic classifications used by the Census Bureau.

For this conference, and for the most part in this paper, the term ethnicity is used in its broader sense to include race. In this paper, we will use quotes whenever the terms "ethnicity", "ethnic", or "ethnic origin", refer to the narrower definition, that is, to exclude race.

We will next discuss each question and provide some historical context.

### **Race**

#### 1990 Census

The 1990 Census question on race (see Figure 2) was asked of all persons. The concept of race reflects self-identification by respondents. Persons were asked to report the one race with which they most closely identified. The Census Bureau did not provide a definition of race; evidence from census studies indicated that respondents would answer according to their own self-perceptions of race.

The 1990 race question, as in previous censuses, included a number of socio-cultural (national origin) groups. It had 14 specific categories – White, Black or Negro, Indian (Amer.), Eskimo, Aleut and nine Asian and Pacific Islander groups – as well as two residual categories, "Other API" (Asian or Pacific Islander) and "Other race". Three categories required write-ins: persons reporting as Indian (Amer.), were asked to write in their enrolled or principal tribe and those reporting as "Other API" or "Other race" to write in their group or race respectively.

#### Change from the 1980 Version

The 1990 question on race had a number of substantial changes from the 1980 version. The term "race" was included as a label and a general instruction was added for 1990 to make the intent of the question clearer and improve reporting. In 1980, no terminology was used to identify the topic of this question. A number of wording and formatting changes were made to improve reporting for certain categories. For example, the instruction on "enrolled or principal tribe" was added to improve reporting for the American Indian population. Also, the Bureau added the response category of "Other API" and the spanner "Asian or Pacific Islander".

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### Brief History

Each census since the very first census in 1790 has included a question on race. However, the content of the question, terminology and number of categories have changed considerably over time in response to a number of factors which are outlined in this paper. For example, the number of specific categories in the 1970 question was only 8; for 1980 and 1990, the number was 14.

Information on race is now obtained through self-identification; prior to 1960, information on race was obtained primarily through observation by the enumerator. The Census Bureau moved to a self-identification approach to improve the statistics on race, especially for persons of mixed racial parentage.<sup>1</sup> Evaluations found evidence that, overall, self-identification resulted in more consistent reporting of race than the enumerator-observation method.

### **Hispanic/Spanish Origin**

#### 1990 Census

The Hispanic/Spanish origin question for the 1990 Census (see Figure 3) was asked of all persons. The question lists four Hispanic categories – "Mexican, Mexican-Am., Chicano"; "Puerto Rican"; "Cuban"; and "Other Spanish/Hispanic" with a write-in line. A "No (not Spanish/Hispanic)" category is listed as the first category.

#### Change from 1980 version

Similar to the race question, the 1990 Hispanic question experienced several formatting and wording changes to improve the reporting and reduce non-response rates. A major change was the inclusion of a space for persons of "Other Spanish/Hispanic" origin to indicate their origin. The terminology "Mexican-Amer." in the Mexican origin category was changed to "Mexican-Am." to reduce misreporting by non-Hispanic persons who wanted to indicate they were "American". Instructions were added with the same intent – to reduce misreporting.

### Brief History

The 1970 Census was the first census to identify the Hispanic population using a self-identification approach. Previously, the Census Bureau identified portions of this population through indirect measures based on birthplace of the person and parents, mother tongue and surname items. The direct question was included first in 1970 in response to demands by community groups for a comprehensive self-identification measure of Hispanic ethnicity not tied to first and second generation population. The 1970 Spanish origin question, included on the five percent sample questionnaire, asked for the person's origin or descent. It gave five

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Hispanic categories (Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American and Other Spanish) and a final response category "No, none of these". The question did not attempt to identify any other origin groups through use of a write-in.

The Census Bureau retained the self-identification question on Hispanic ethnicity in the 1980 question. In 1980, the question was asked of all persons and the wording asked respondents directly whether or not they were of "Spanish/Hispanic" origin or descent.

### **Ancestry**

#### 1990 Census

The ancestry question, "What is your ancestry or ethnic origin", was asked of a sample of the population (see Figure 4). This question was open-ended, requiring persons to write in their responses. The question provided for the reporting of multiple origin, unlike the race and Hispanic origin questions that asked persons to report one group.

The Bureau provided several aids to the respondents because previous tests showed that respondents in some areas of the country and some population groups had difficulty answering the ancestry question. The question included a relatively long list of 22 examples of responses to help respondents answer with an ethnic group. The question included the instruction, "See instruction guide for further information". The instruction guide gave a broad definition of ancestry, along with more examples of groups and some general guidelines on how to report one's group(s).

#### Change from 1980 Version

The revisions to the ancestry question for 1990 were relatively minor compared to those for the race and Hispanic origin questions. Changes were made to both the wording of the questions and the instructions to clarify the intent of the question, improve reporting and reduce non-response. For instance, the term "ethnic origin" was added to the question for 1990. Additions and deletions were made to the ancestry examples to reduce misreporting and to encourage a broader interpretation of ethnicity beyond reporting place or country of birth.

#### Brief History

The 1980 Census became a watershed in the collection of data on ethnicity because this was the first census to include a comprehensive identifier of all ethnic groups in the country, regardless of generation. In previous censuses, the Census Bureau collected information on ethnicity through questions on birthplace of the person and the person's parents and through mother tongue of the person and person's parents.



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The Bureau's initial attempt to use a self-identification approach to collect data on the "ethnicity" of the population took place in our demographic survey program, namely the November 1969 Current Population Survey (CPS). The CPS is the largest ongoing national probability sample survey of households in the United States. The initial question used the label "origin and descent" and used a listing format of about 15 to 20 specific categories. Persons were asked to report in one category (see Appendix A). The listing format with the addition of a residual "Other" category was used in subsequent CPSs during the 1970s and the early pretests for the 1980 Census. The Census Bureau, however, abandoned the listing format as a means of obtaining information on "ethnicity" of the total population in the 1980 Census.

The Census Bureau decided not to use a question with pre-listed categories for the 1980 Census for five reasons:

1. Johnson (1974) showed that some European ethnic groups had a high degree of inconsistency in the reporting of ethnic origin. For example, only about 55 percent of matched persons who reported English, Scottish or Welsh in a March 1971 CPS reported that same origin in March 1972.
2. For persons of multiple origin, one of which is listed and one not, there was a tendency to report the listed origin even though that might not be the origin with which the person most closely identified.
3. Pre-listed questions that allowed only one response also led persons of multiple origin to report as "other" rather than choose a single response. Tests showed that the consistency of reporting improved when persons could report more than one origin.
4. The Bureau found it difficult to provide enough categories within the space constraints of the census questionnaire to avoid large numbers of persons reporting in the "other" category.
5. Technical constraints in census processing did not allow for "reading" multiple responses in a listing format.

Based on research and consultation with a number of experts on ethnicity, the Census Bureau began to test and subsequently decided to include an open-ended, self-identification question in the 1980 Census. In addition to changes in the question format, the terminology of the question changed from "origin or descent" to "ancestry" because some respondents did not understand the former terminology. However, the Census Bureau continues to use a general ethnic question with a listing format in its current surveys, primarily to obtain intercensal data on the Hispanic origin population. (See Appendix A for question used in current surveys.)

## **Factors affecting Question Content**

There is an impressive array of forces that work to determine what questions are included on the census form. The following criteria, however, are crucial for including topics on the census form and help the Census Bureau decide which among many data needs can be addressed on the form. Information derived from the question must: 1) meet a legislative mandate; 2) fulfill federal program requirements; or 3) fill a broad societal need.

In developing the content of the race, Hispanic origin and ancestry questions, the Census Bureau implemented a multifaceted seven-year research program, based on consultations with a variety of data users, assessment of data needs and testing. McKenney, Cresce and Johnson (1988) provide detailed documentation of this program. This next section provides a summary of the major aspects of that program.

## **Data Needs**

Lichtman-Panzer (1988) identified the major sources of recommendations for questions and described the advice received from each of these sources and its effect on questionnaire content development. These major sources are: 1) local public meetings (LPMs); 2) federal agencies; 3) conferences and meetings with advisory groups, professional organizations and subject-matter experts; and 4) other ongoing channels of communication with professional organizations, the general public and Congress (1988, 1). From these sources, the Bureau receives a wide range of recommendations – some dealing with major revisions to question content and others with relatively minor changes to existing questions. There are many valuable recommendations for new questions but, as we note below, severe restrictions on the size of the questionnaire and reporting burden limit what can be added to the questionnaire.

During the last two decades, the needs for ethnic data by both governmental and private data users grew significantly. Part of the increased demand has been tied to federal legislation, a federal statistical directive and program regulations that specify the use of census data on race and Hispanic origin. In addition, Congresspersons, private groups and individuals have requested more ethnic detail, especially for the newer immigrant groups.

Policy Statistical Directive No. 15, issued by the Office of Management and Budget, requires the collection of data on five groups – White, Black, Asian and Pacific Islander, American Indian and Alaska Native and Hispanic origin. Public law 94-311 requires the collection of statistics on Hispanics. Also, information on the five groups mentioned above is required for state redistricting programs, the drawing of political lines for local jurisdictions and for federal programs identified by acts such as the Voting Rights Act amendments of 1982. In addition, several laws and programs require data specifically on American Indians, Eskimos, Aleuts and Hawaiians.

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Ancestry information is not explicitly required by any federal legislation or directive. However, recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions extending the coverage of affirmative action and equal employment provisions to "ethnic" groups other than those traditionally interpreted to be the focus of legislation have shown the importance of ancestry data. Also, the ancestry data are very important for state and local governments in identifying and assessing the social and economic condition of groups that are concentrated in a given region or local area or groups that are small and isolated. Furthermore, researchers use the data for analyzing ethnicity; organizations and individuals use the data for many purposes such as marketing, developing and evaluating programs, etc. More specifics on data needs are provided by the del Pinal and Lapham paper for the U.S. (and Goldmann and Gagné papers for Canada).

### **Content Testing**

Content testing was a particularly important part of the content development process for the 1990 ethnic questions. The testing program was the most extensive the Bureau had ever conducted for the ethnic questions. The program included a variety of testing tools including focus groups, informal and special targeted surveys, local test censuses and a national probability sample.

The tests and their objectives were designed to improve the quality of ethnic information by addressing problems noted with each of the questions in the 1980 Census. The major objectives are outlined below.

### Summary of Test Objectives for the 1990 Ethnic Questions

<u>Question</u>	<u>Objective</u>
Race	1. Make intent of question clearer to respondents and improve reporting, especially in the American Indian and Other race categories.
	2. Provide 100-percent data on <u>total</u> Asian and Pacific Islander population. <sup>2</sup>
Hispanic Origin	1. Reduce high non-response.
	2. Reduce misreporting in Mexican category by non-Hispanic persons.
	3. Improve reporting and provide data for detailed "Other Hispanic" groups.
Ancestry	1. Reduce high non-response.
	2. Make question clearer to respondents and improve overall reporting.



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3. Reduce overreporting of English and improve consistency of reporting for some groups.

We will discuss the extent to which these objectives were met in the "Evaluation" section of the paper.

### **Socio-political Factors**

William Petersen in *The Politics of Numbers* (1983) indicates that political and fiscal influences are among the most important factors affecting the enumeration of any ethnic group. Indeed, throughout the United States census history, socio-political factors have influenced the development and evolution of the ethnic questions, their categories and terminology. Although these factors will be discussed in depth in the Estrada paper for the U.S. (and Kobayashi for Canada), it is worth providing a few examples in the context of this paper.

Wright, Rossi and Juravieh in *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups* (1980) state that since the founding of this country, race has been a population characteristic of such consistently strong political interest that the U.S. censuses always tallied racial composition. In particular, flows of immigration, public policy, perceived recognition, changing identity, etc., have influenced the wording and categories of the race question over the decades. For instance, increased immigration from Southeast Asian countries and the Indian subcontinent was a contributing factor to the addition of several Asian categories such as Asian Indian and Vietnamese in the 1980 Census. Petersen notes the effect of shifting federal policies as well as changes in census procedures and racial identity on the fluctuations in the counts of American Indians in the censuses. The inclusion of a separate classification for persons of mixed racial parentage in the race item is a strong, emerging issue for the future.

Political pressures, primarily from the Asian and Pacific Islander community, and Congress influenced the Census Bureau's final decision on the 1990 Census race question. The Bureau tested a number of alternative questions in its 1990 testing program. Based on evaluations of test results, assessment of data needs and consultations with a wide variety of data users, the Census Bureau submitted to Congress for approval a new, shortened race question with only 7 categories for the 1990 Census (see Appendix A). The Bureau had determined that this shortened question that required all Asian and Pacific Islanders to write in their individual group performed better for all races than other versions. However, the Asian and Pacific Islander community had strong misgivings about the quality of data for the detailed groups, especially the newer immigrants. After considerable controversy and congressional legislation on the matter, the Bureau reconsidered its original decision and decided to use an untested format with the listing of nine detailed API groups and a residual "Other API" category.

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Pressures from the Hispanic community led to the inclusion of the self-identification question on Hispanic ethnicity on the 1970 sample questionnaire. Similar pressures, along with the Federal Statistical Directive No. 15 and a Congressional resolution on the collection of data for Hispanics by federal agencies, helped to assure the inclusion of a comparable question on a 100 percent basis in 1980. In contrast, some social scientists and general data users criticize the inclusion of a separate question targeted to one ethnic group.

Some ethnic groups, not identified specifically in the race and Hispanic origin questions, have raised the issue of equitable treatment in the census. They assert that the groups identified by the race and Hispanic origin questions on a 100 percent basis receive unfair advantages in data collection and publication. In particular, race and Hispanic origin data are available earlier, in greater geographic detail and with more cross-tabulations than ancestry data. The sample tabulations that present ancestry information on groups such as Italian, Polish and Arab are released later in the process. The Census Bureau attempts to address this issue through question design for the 1990 Census were unsuccessful; the Bureau tested alternative formats that would allow persons of all ethnic groups to report on a 100 percent basis. The Bureau also considered a combined Hispanic origin and ancestry question but did not test this approach based on advice received through consultations.<sup>3</sup>

### **Other Significant Factors**

Finally, data capture technology and the limited size of the questionnaire have had an important impact on question selection and design. Data capture technology, using electronic "reading" of microfilmed forms, has been the mainstay of data collection and processing for the last three censuses. Use of this technology, however, has also placed some important restrictions such as how questions are formatted on the page.

In addition, restrictions on questionnaire design imposed by the Office of Management and Budget to constrain respondent burden have also had an important effect. Restrictions imposed by the need to minimize respondent burden have made meeting federal legislative and agency program requirements the paramount criterion for including questions in the census, particularly on a 100 percent basis.

### **Summary**

Development of questionnaire content is not an exercise in social science research conducted in a vacuum. Rather, it involves a competent use of social science research methodology to meet legislative, program and societal needs based on developing a consensus among those most interested in the data. It also involves a sensitivity to data needs as expressed through the political process.

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The next section will discuss some preliminary evaluations of 1990 data for the ethnic questions.

### **Evaluations of Ethnic-related Questions and Issues Raised**

We present below data from the 1990 Census on the racial and "ethnic" composition of the population and provide preliminary evaluations of these data (see Tables 1-9). The 1990 Census results showed that the United States population is more racially and "ethnically" diverse than at any other time in its history. The preliminary evaluations raise issues that need to be addressed in conducting research and planning the ethnic content for the 2000 Census. More extensive analysis and evaluations of the 1990 Census, especially the Content Reinterview Survey, will be available in the future.

#### **Race**

The American Indian, Eskimo and Aleut, Asian and Pacific Islander and Black populations grew faster than the total or White population during the 1980-90 decade (see Table 1).

The Asian and Pacific Islander population grew the fastest, actually doubling its population over the 10-year period. Immigration was the major contributor to the growth. The American Indian, Aleut and Eskimo population, the numerically smallest group, grew at 38 percent, about four times as fast as the nation as a whole. The increase for American Indians, Eskimos and Aleuts far exceeded what could be attributed to natural increase. The Black population also had substantial growth considering its relatively large size.

Preliminary evaluations of the 1990 race data suggest overall good quality. However, there were significant problems related to question wording and respondents' understanding of the question and categories.

Information from the data collection stages (that is, telephone inquiries to the field and processing offices) indicate that a substantial number of persons did not understand how to answer the race question. The majority of the inquiries were related to: 1) persons who appeared to be confused by the listing of socio-cultural groups, and therefore, wanted to list their nationality group, for example, Polish or Jamaican; 2) persons of Hispanic origin who felt that the race question or its categories were not relevant to them; and 3) persons of mixed parentage or parents of interracial children who wanted to report more than one race.

One index of data quality is the extent that computer allocation is required to impute values when race is left completely blank or responses are not classifiable. The 1990 allocation rate for race was relatively low (2.7 percent), although somewhat higher than the 1980 rate of 1.5 percent (see Table 2). The higher 1990 rate was due in part to changes in procedures for following up on blanks on the short form questionnaires.



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The allocation rate varied considerably by area of the country. For example, the allocation rate was above the national level for states such as California and Texas (4.3 and 3.3 percent, respectively) which have large Hispanic populations. This finding is consistent with evaluations from the 1980 Census and 1990 testing program showing that Hispanics had difficulty in answering the race question. Unexplained, however, are the relatively high allocation rates for states such as Hawaii (3.7 percent) and Rhode Island (4.5 percent).

The Census Bureau conducted a special automated operation to review, code and edit write-in responses to the 1990 race question (see Young 1991). Since the 1990 race question was untested, the Bureau conducted a survey in 1989 to identify possible problem responses and to refine the coding and editing procedures for handling such cases in the census. Both the 1990 experience and the 1989 survey suggest that the listing of national origin groups in the race item combined with the write-in space for three categories encouraged persons to write-in responses such as "American", Italian, Dominican or other nationalities. Two types of problems of significant concern were noted with the write-ins: 1) some persons providing write-ins did not mark a circle (one-third of the nearly eight million write-ins in 1990); and 2) some persons marked a circle inconsistent with the write-in. As a consequence, the automated procedures for coding and editing (classifying write-ins in the appropriate category) proved to be essential for providing quality race data for the 1990 Census. Information about this problem is outlined below.

### No circle marked:

More than two out of every three write-ins without a circle marked in the race item were entries reflecting Hispanic ethnicity (for example, Spanish, Mexican, Puerto Rican) and, thus, were classified as "Other race". There were, however, write-ins with no circle filled belonging in the Asian and Pacific Islander, American Indian, Black and White categories.

### Consistency of write-in with marked circle (see Table 3):

Of all persons marking the American Indian circle, only 83 percent provided a write-in response consistent with the circle. (Eight percent did not provide any write-in.)

Of those persons providing a write-in and marking the American Indian circle, 91 percent reported a tribe(s), or a general response of "American Indian". About 9 percent provided a write-in that was not classified as American Indian.

Of the write-ins with the Other API circle marked, only 46 percent were Asian or Pacific Islander write-ins. Nearly 40 percent were Hispanic group write-ins.

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Of the write-ins with the Other race circle marked, 57 percent were Other race; 13 percent were Asian or Pacific Islander write-ins.

The coding and editing also affected the data for the categories that did not require a write-in. For instance, the final 1990 count of the Black population (about 30 million) included about 370,000 persons who wrote in an entry classified as Black but did not mark the Black category. Of the 370,000 write-ins classified as Black, about 30 percent did not have a circle marked, 50 percent had the Other race circle marked and about 9 percent had the Other API circle marked. Although the Bureau anticipated that most of the write-ins would be African-American, most, about three-fourths, were ethnic subgroups such as Jamaican and Haitian within the Black population.

The reporting in the American Indian category is a persistent problem. The higher than expected growth rate of 38 percent for the American Indian population from 1980 to 1990, as well as that experienced in previous decades, raises the issue about what the race question is measuring for this population. A number of factors, such as changing self-identification, seeking of ethnic roots and improvements in census procedures probably contributed to the growth noted in recent decades. Passel and Berman (1986) in a study of the counts for this population conclude that a major part of the increase between 1970 and 1980 was due to a shift in self-identification; persons who chose to report as White in previous censuses chose to change and report as Indian in 1980. Census information shows that about six to nine million persons who report as White in the race item report American Indian as a single entry or in combination with another group in the ancestry item. Snipp (1989) indicated that the large numbers of persons with Indian ancestry, along with political factors, make it very difficult to predict the future growth of this population. Forbes (1990) presents yet another view; he asserts that the American Indian population's size should be even larger than enumerated as it should include the hundreds of thousands of people from Meso-America, the Caribbean and South America.

A preliminary review of a sample of 1990 questionnaires (after coding and editing) for two states suggests the following types of problem responses:

Households with parents reported as Asian Indian and their children reported in the category Indian Amer. Forbes had noted earlier that Asian Indians may report in this category as they were adopting the label "Indian-American".

Households with parents writing in Hispanic or Mexican and marking no circle or the Other race circle and reporting children as Indian (Amer). It is not clear whether this is intentional reporting in recognition of their Indian heritage or misreporting to indicate that the children were Americans.



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A higher than expected reporting of Cherokee tribe, especially on the long form (sample questionnaires). One hypothesis is that the ancestry question on the long form influenced the reporting of race.

McKenney, Cresce and Johnson (1988) noted that the 1980 Content Reinterview Survey (CRS) showed relatively poor consistency (L-fold index of inconsistency) for the American Indian category. Changes were made in the question format to improve reporting in the category for 1990 but the preliminary results suggest some continued problems. The quality of the data for this population is especially important since it is relatively small in size and a number of government programs use census data to allocate funds to tribal governments and American Indian organizations. Snipp, Passel and others have identified a number of issues based on their evaluations of the 1980 data. Additional research is definitely needed to understand how persons classify themselves as American Indian and how they interpret various terminologies.

In evaluating the overall race data it is important to note that most persons do understand and answer the race question. It may be, however, that a higher proportion of persons in 1990 than in 1980 had difficulties in answering the question. The 1980 evaluation showed overall high consistency in the reporting of race with the exception of the "Indian (Amer.)" and "Other race" categories. The 1990 Census results suggest these two categories, along with "Other API", experienced problem reporting. The Bureau expended considerable resources to edit and code the 1990 information to produce the most accurate data. However, considering the uses of the data to draw political boundaries for very small geographic levels and to provide funding, the Bureau's objective for the future is to improve the reporting in the item.

### **Hispanic Origin**

Results from the 1990 Census (see Table 5) show that the Hispanic population of some 22.4 million had grown by 53 percent, or 7.7 million, since 1980. The Mexican and "Other Spanish/Hispanic" populations grew the fastest (54 and 67 percent, respectively). The 1990 total was higher than what was expected based on independent estimates. The increase, nevertheless, seems reasonable given the relatively high fertility rates and large, but not well measured, immigration flows from Spanish-speaking countries.

For the Hispanic question, the allocation rate (for non-response) for 100 percent processing was high at 10 percent. The allocation rate was slightly higher in the Northeast and South regions, with the West region having the lowest rate (7 percent). These rates were considerably higher than those in the 1980 Census for the United States and for each region. One important reason for the increased allocation in 1990 was the decision, based on budget limitations, to cut back on field follow-up for short form questionnaires that failed field content edit. The 1980 question required extensive field follow-up to obtain responses.



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The allocation rate for the sample forms was also higher in 1990 than it was in 1980. Unlike the 1990 follow-up procedures for the short form questionnaire, the procedures for sample (long form) questionnaires allowed for field follow-up on all questionnaires that failed field content edit. Thus, this information provides some evidence that persons may have had more difficulty answering the Hispanic question in the 1990 Census than in the 1980 Census (see Table 6).

In our content testing for the 1990 Census, we tried to reduce allocation by using an abbreviated version of the question. The question had two response categories — "No, not Spanish/Hispanic" and "Yes, Spanish/Hispanic" — with a space for respondents who replied "Yes" to write a specific Hispanic group. The question succeeded in reducing allocation but did not do as good a job of identifying Hispanic subgroups. For this reason we chose to use a modified version of the 1980 question.

Our previous studies indicated that most persons who do not answer the Hispanic question are not Hispanic. Although the results from the 1990 Content Reinterview Survey are not yet available, 1990 Census data showing a higher percent Hispanic among those who reported than among those whose origin was allocated seem to corroborate this finding. Our 1980 Content Reinterview Survey (CRS) and 1990 pretests indicated quite clearly that most persons who did not respond to the census question were not Hispanic.

Another of our concerns regarding data quality for the 1990 Hispanic question was misreporting in the Mexican origin and "Other Spanish/Hispanic" categories. We had previously found evidence of misreporting by non-Hispanics in the "Mexican origin" category in the 1980 Census.<sup>4</sup> Review of questionnaires and reinterviews of a sample of respondents revealed that some persons, reacting to the term "Mexican-Amer." in the Hispanic question thought we were asking if they were "Mexican or American" and chose the category to indicate they were "American". Also, some persons misreported in that category because they did not understand the terms "Spanish" or "Hispanic". We also found evidence of inconsistent reporting into the "Other Hispanic" category.

Our 1990 content testing showed that changes in the response categories and instructions resulted in less misreporting of non-Hispanics into the "Mexican origin" category. There remains some evidence of this problem in the 1990 Census but it does not seem to be on the same scale as in the 1980 Census. Despite improvements to the question, there still seems to be a problem with non-Hispanic persons reporting as "Other Spanish/Hispanic". Based on evaluations of the 1980 Census and 1990 Census pretests, it appears that persons reporting in this category include Brazilians and other persons of Portuguese descent who feel the term "Hispanic" also applies to them and fully non-Spanish persons who thought that the category meant "Other than Spanish/Hispanic" or wanted to register their ancestry somewhere in the item.

## **Ancestry**

About 90 percent of the population in the 1990 Census reported an ancestry with only 1.8 million of the 225 million who reported an ancestry giving a response that was uncodable (see Table 7). These results parallel the 1980 results that show about 90 percent with an ancestry response and 1.4 million out of 204 million with an uncodable response.

Results from the 1990 Census also show that the percent reporting an ancestry was over 90 percent for all regions except the South. Only 89 percent in the South reported an ancestry; this region had the highest non-response rate and the highest proportion reporting "American". The Northeast, Midwest and West regions had similar percentages (about 92 percent) of persons reporting ancestry. However, the incidence of unclassifiable responses was slightly higher in the Midwest region.

There is consistency at the national level in general types of ancestry response between 1980 and 1990. For example, the percent of persons reporting "American" ancestry was very similar between 1980 and 1990 (5.2 percent in 1990 and 5.9 percent in 1980). The percent not reporting ancestry actually declined slightly from 1980 level of 10.2 percent to 9.6 percent in 1990. Reducing the relatively high non-response rates for this item was one of the objectives for 1990. The percent with ancestry not classified remained practically the same in both censuses (see Table 8).

Despite apparent consistency at the national level, a review of data at the region and division level reveals some interesting differences between the 1980 and 1990 Census results. Most regions and their respective divisions experienced a decline in the percent reporting "American" with the exception of the East South Central division (consisting of Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi and Tennessee) of the South Region. The East South Central division had a higher percentage reporting "American" and higher percentages of persons with an unclassifiable ancestry or with no ancestry reported. Thus, the East South Central division was the only division to have appreciably worse reporting on the ancestry question in 1990 than in 1980.

The relatively high rates of non-response and unclassifiable ancestries in the South may reflect how persons in this region perceive their ethnicity. Detailed analysis of the 1980 Content Reinterview Survey data indicated that some White respondents with Northern or Western European ancestry (obtained through detailed questions on birthplace of ancestors) in the South tended to provide general responses such as "American", "United States" or not at all rather than a specific ancestry. In addition, many of these areas have not received significant immigration from abroad and, as a result, the most salient distinction is racial — that is, whether one is Black or White. The National Opinion Research Center has found similar response patterns for the South in their studies.



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Despite the relatively high rates of non-response and reporting of American in the South, the slight decline at the national level in the percentages reporting American or not reporting at all does not appear to support the contention that reporting of specific ethnic groups is in decline. At this stage of evaluation, however, we cannot tell precisely what the 1990 results imply about the status of reporting ethnicity in the United States. Researchers, however, will soon have a wealth of information on ancestry that will help answer these questions.

Consistency between 1980 and 1990 in gross categories of ancestry reporting provides some evidence that the 1990 ancestry question worked reasonably well. Consistency between 1980 and 1990 in levels of specific ancestry groups, however, is of equal concern and importance. As we will discuss later in this paper, inconsistency in levels of ancestry groups across several different data collection points, including the 1980 Census, was one of Farley's major criticisms of the 1980 ancestry question. In his comparison of 1980 results with those from the November 1979 Current Population Survey (CPS) and the 1986 National Content Test, he found significant differences among the data sets for some of the largest groups, especially "English" and "German". The Census Bureau also noted differences between the November 1979 CPS and the 1980 Census for a number of groups, especially the "English", and provided some reasons for the discrepancies (see U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1982).

The 1990 and 1980 Censuses provide results that show both significant inconsistencies and strong consistencies in levels of ancestry groups over a period of time (see table 9). For groups such as Italians, Polish, Dutch, Swedish, Russian, Welsh, Danish, Swiss, Austrian and Lebanese, there was reasonable consistency between 1980 and 1990. On the other hand, there were groups that showed inconsistent reporting. For instance, persons of German ancestry substantially increased from 49.2 million in 1980 to 58.0 million in 1990. By contrast, persons reporting English ancestry declined substantially from 49.6 million in 1980 to 32.7 million in 1990.<sup>5</sup> The number of persons reporting Scottish, Irish and French ancestry also declined but the declines were not as dramatic as that for English.

What explanations can we provide for such large differences between 1980 and 1990? Changes in processing procedures influenced changes in counts for some groups but other discrepancies raise concerns about the consistency of reporting.

The substantial differences between 1980 and 1990 for the Scottish and Irish ancestries appear to have a relatively simple explanation. In 1980 we treated this combination of groups as a multiple response and tabulated them under Scotch and Irish categories. In 1990 and the 1986 National Content Test we decided to provide a unique code to persons reporting "Scotch-Irish" and did not treat it as a multiple response. Thus, it is not surprising that both Scotch and Irish were lower in 1990 and in the 1986 National Content Test. In fact, if one were to add the "Scotch-Irish" total to the Irish and Scotch totals, one would obtain levels comparable to 1980 numbers.



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The substantially increased reporting of German in the 1990 Census relative to the 1980 Census seems to add to the concern about inconsistent reporting for this question. By contrast, the 1986 National Content Test, using a question similar to the one used in 1990, produced an estimate of 57.2 million persons of German ancestry that was quite close to the 1990 German total. One possible explanation for these apparently contradictory results is that "German" is used as the first ancestry example in the 1990 and 1986 questions but was the fourth example in 1980. For persons who may not be sure of their ethnic origin or ancestry, the examples provided may serve as response categories from which the respondent may choose the first that applies.

The examples provided also may have encouraged respondents to use them as response categories. Substantial increases from 1980 to 1990 in the number of Cajuns and French Canadians, which were added as examples for the 1990 question, and a decline for French which was included as an example in 1980 but not in 1990, lend some credence to this hypothesis. The number of Cajuns jumped dramatically from about 30 thousand in 1980 to about 600 thousand in 1990 and French Canadian totals grew from about 780 thousand in 1980 to 2.2 million in 1990; on the other hand, French declined from about 13 million to 10 million over the decade. Evidence of this "example effect" on the question raises questions about how respondents perceive their ethnicity and how we structure the question. This topic certainly will be included for content testing during the 1990s.

The decline in reporting of English seems to be tied directly to the changes in question design (such as eliminating "English" as an example and placing the ancestry question before the language question) that addressed apparent overreporting in 1980. Part of the difference can be accounted for by the separate identification of "British". Even if we were to include "British" with English, however, we could account for only a small portion of the difference.

Consistency of response, especially consistency of reporting of individual respondents, will be a key component of evaluation research for the ancestry question. What we have provided here is only a preliminary sketch to describe consistency at a macro or gross level.

### **Issues Raised by Evaluations**

Evaluation of the race, Hispanic origin and ancestry questions raises a number of important issues.

#### Measurement

First, there is the issue of what we are measuring for certain groups. Although the race question asks respondents to report their race, some respondents, especially Hispanics, have difficulty answering this question, possibly because they do not see their group as having a racial identity separate from their ethnic identity and do not see their group listed on the question (see Table

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4 and the discussion in the next section). The problematic reporting of American Indian in the race item provides more evidence of confusion among some respondents of the intent of the race item. Although the impact on the quality of the race data as a whole is not substantial, it can have a significant impact on data for relatively small population groups such as the American Indian population.

For the Hispanic item the measurement issue is affected by two factors – the problem of defining "Hispanicity" and the relatively high non-response rates. As we will discuss later, there is debate about what, if any, term should be used to identify the diverse groups comprising the Hispanic population. No matter what term is chosen, there will be some persons of Spanish/Hispanic/Latino origin who will not identify positively either because they do not understand the terminology or they simply do not identify with the ethnicity of their ancestors. Persistently high non-response indicates that respondents, primarily non-Hispanics, have some difficulty with this question. Assigning a response by computer allocation in many cases provides a reasonably good "fix" for the problem. The use of a computer allocation that in some cases assigns an origin from a next door neighbor or someone else nearby may not always make correct "guesses" and may over-assign or under-assign a particular origin (Hispanic or Not Hispanic) in a particular area.

For the ancestry item we have noted some improvement in the level of non-response in 1990, although the level is still fairly high. We have also noted evidence of gross consistency of reporting for some, but not all, specific ancestry groups. There remains the question of what these numbers "mean" in terms of describing how many people reported groups such as "Irish". Responses to this open-ended question probably reflect a wide range of motivations including close identification with one's ancestral ties, "symbolic" affiliation or lack of affiliation with any group resulting in responses such as "Heinz 57."

### Overlapping Questions

We have fairly strong justifications (based on legislative and program needs) for asking separate questions on race, Hispanic origin and ancestry. There is, however, overlap among these questions and this overlap is causing some respondents to have problems answering one or more of them. For example, a non-Hispanic White or Black person reporting in the race item also may answer the ancestry question but feel that the Hispanic question does not apply to them. An Hispanic may report his or her group in the race item and skip the Hispanic and ancestry items, thinking that they are redundant. The perceived redundancy of the questions has created a certain pressure to combine questions but there are strong pressures to keep the questions separate.



## **Conceptual Background for Census Questions on Ethnicity**

### **Diversity of Identifiers of Ethnicity in U. S. Censuses**

Over a 200-year period, decennial censuses have included a wide variety of information on ethnicity. Figure 5 reveals a patchwork-quilt pattern of ethnic-related information. Facsimiles for all these questions appears in the report *200 Years of U.S. Census Taking: Population and Housing Questions, 1790-1990* (1989).

Most of the ethnic-related questions such as place of birth, mother tongue and current non-English language spoken asked over time have been objective in nature. Use of more subjective identifiers of ethnicity based on self-identification is a relatively recent phenomenon in U.S. census taking.

The "subjective" identifiers such as Hispanic origin and ancestry came about in large part because of: 1) pressure to provide data based on self-identification; 2) pressure to obtain data on ethnic groups, regardless of generation; and 3) declining proportions of the population where national origin could be identified through the birthplace and parentage questions included in the 1940 through 1970 Censuses.<sup>6</sup> However, increased immigration flows in the 1980s should result in a larger proportion of first and second generation persons and may increase pressure to re-institute parental birthplace questions.

Levin and Farley's (1982) analysis of the historic comparability of ethnic-related questions noted that census questions such as country of birth and parental birthplace provided comparable data over time. Other questions such as mother tongue (defined in the 1970 and 1960 Censuses as the language spoken in the person's home when he/she was a child) were asked only intermittently. In large part, the inclusion (or exclusion) of items was guided more by the salient policy questions or societal issues at the time than by an attempt to provide a consistent, comprehensive identification of ethnicity. Levin and Farley also indicate, however, that collection of data on ethnicity in the United States is made more complex because of "the lack of clear cut definitions, changing terminologies, poor reliability, difficulty of classification, and lack of knowledge of the degree of affiliation with a group or groups" (1982, 1).

### **Diversity of Views in the Research Community on Definition of Ethnicity**

A number of sociologists and anthropologists including Isajiw (1974), Barth (1969), Cohen (1978), Thernstron et al. (1980), Petersen (1980), Despres (1975), Reminick (1983), Royce (1982) and Keefe (1989) have addressed the problem of defining ethnicity. For example, Isajiw (1974) found 27 definitions of ethnicity in his review of 65 sociological and anthropological studies on the topic (1974, 113). He identified 12 different attributes or dimensions of ethnicity. Examples of these attributes were common national or geographic origin or common ancestors



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(the most frequently mentioned dimension), same culture, religion, race or physical characteristics and language (1974, 117). Similarly, Thernstron, Orlov, and Handlin, in their introduction to a notable work on ethnicity, *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*, list 14 different "features" of ethnicity (1980, vi). They note that defining a particular group as an "ethnic group" may involve any combination of these features.

The following are a few examples of the definitions that sociologists and anthropologists have used:

Ethnicity, then is a set of descent-based cultural identifiers used to assign persons to groupings that expand and contract in inverse relation to the scale of inclusiveness and exclusiveness of the membership. (Cohen 1978, 387)

When I use the term "ethnic group," then, I refer to a type of group contained within the national boundaries of America. I shall mean by it any group which is defined or set off by race, religion, or national origin, or some combination of these categories .... All of these categories have a common social-psychological referent, in that all of them serve to create, through historical circumstances, a sense of peoplehood for groups within the United States, and this common referent of peoplehood is recognized in the American public's usage of these terms, frequently in interchangeable fashion. (Gordon 1964, 27)

... A group of persons who have common ancestral origin and the same cultural traits, who have a sense of peoplehood and *Gemeinschaft* type of relations, who are of immigrant background and have either minority or majority status within a larger society. (Isajiw 1974, 118)

Thus far, I have attempted to establish that ethnic groups must be conceived of as type of descent group whose members validate their claim to shared descent by pointing to cultural attributes which they believe they hold in common. (Keyes 1976, 208)

The diversity of definitions of ethnicity has had a significant impact on the development of a comprehensive identifier in the census. Even if the Census Bureau identified a set of questions that encompassed key aspects of what comprises "ethnicity", the issue would still remain about what combination of responses indicated a person "belonged" to a given group. Furthermore, severe competition among many important questions for space on the questionnaire makes it unlikely that the "ideal" set of ethnic questions could all be included. Such extensive inquiries are probably more appropriate for special surveys but such a survey could probably not provide data for relatively small groups or the geographic detail for both large and small groups.

Another facet of the debate about what comprises ethnicity is whether this concept can be defined objectively and validated. Much of the literature on ethnicity assumes the existence of

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some obtainable set of information that would define the person's ethnic affiliation. With this information, one could consistently and reliably identify a person's ethnic group. This assumption, in turn, implies that ethnicity is a characteristic that a person simply has. However, there is no consensus in the sociological and especially in the anthropological literature that ethnicity is solely or mostly an objectively definable characteristic.

Isajiw expressed concerns with the subjective approach to identifying ethnicity. (As discussed earlier, the Bureau uses the subjective approach for its ethnic questions.) He noted that one could define ethnicity in a relatively loose manner through self identification. Such an approach would allow for describing or enumerating the group or using statistical correlations for distributions of features in the group. But, as he notes: "any attempt to go beyond description, any attempt at explanation or meaningful comparison requires not only an explicit definition of ethnicity, but a definition which is denotative rather than merely connotative, since the latter alone tells us little about the nature of a group as an ethnic group" (1974, 112).

Liebertson and Waters (1988) state effectively some of the reasons why it is difficult to devise an objective ethnic question (or questions) that has both validity and reliability. They note that ethnic groups are not fixed categories traceable to the origin of the human species. Rather, they are more like living organisms subject to dynamic processes of birth, maintenance and decline. Liebertson and Waters get to the essence of the matter by stating that: "Ethnic origin, from this point of view, is both a status and a process" (1988, 253). Inconsistent responses, then, may be the result of flux in the categories and concepts themselves as well as measurement errors due to flawed questions and failures of the enumerators. For instance, the inconsistent reporting noted for the ancestry question may be related to the flux. Liebertson and Waters' position implies that one would still have inconsistencies even if we had a flawless ethnic question.

Hirschman, in a general discussion on the measurement of ethnicity, notes that "In spite of the vagueness of meaning and the permeable boundaries of ethnicity, population perceptions are usually sufficient to sort most of the population into standard classifications". (1987, 557)

We will now discuss the race, Hispanic origin and ancestry questions as they relate to the concept of ethnicity.

### **Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ancestry Questions as Identifiers of Ethnicity**

#### Race

The race question is one of the most controversial items in the census. At least two core issues feed this controversy:

1. Is race a relevant concept in today's society or does it just perpetuate racism?



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2. If race is still relevant, is it different from ethnicity or one of the many dimensions of ethnicity?

Some scholars and general data users argue that the race concept should be abandoned from all classifications because it is racist, ambiguous and vague. Ashley Montagu (1964) has been perhaps the most prominent in denouncing this concept; he argues for an ethnic classification. Albert Yee (1981) states that race as a classification system, no matter how well qualified, has perpetuated racism and its dangers to human understanding and individuals. Other social scientists point to research such as William Julius Wilson (1978) that suggests that race is no longer the all-pervasive factor in determining the conditions of a group. Additional arguments are that race has become too political in the census; groups with very small numbers are listed separately in the question on race; and the number of groups wanting to be listed separately continues to grow.

In contrast to the views outlined above, some researchers view race as a viable concept, reflecting the social realities of United States society. They cite analytical studies by the National Opinion Research Center, National Urban League, Massey and Denton (1989) and Farley and Allen (1987) that show, for example, a strong relationship between racial groupings and social and economic characteristics, political behavior, residential patterns, etc. Some social scientists and general data users argue forcefully that race classification is needed to provide data to determine patterns of discrimination; to develop and evaluate programs to promote equality in the society; and to assess how well historically disadvantaged groups are faring. Also, they note that most of the United States population understands and answers the race question in the census. Even if we accept that race is a salient factor in our society, the next issue is whether race should be considered as a separate concept or as one dimension of ethnicity. Researchers such as Petersen (1980) and Thernstron (1980) consider race as an attribute of ethnicity. Petersen indicates that in many respects race is the most significant attribute of ethnicity. Other researchers such as Feagin (1978) identify racial and ethnic groups separately; still others are not explicit in their classification.

As mentioned in a previous section of this paper, the Census Bureau considers race and "ethnic" origin as different concepts. However, for some respondents, the differences between the concepts are not distinct; they view the race and "ethnic" (Hispanic origin or ancestry) questions as asking for the same identity and therefore confusing. Also, the meanings of the inquiries are subject to different interpretations. For example, the Bureau's focus group studies and ethnographic research show that some Hispanics identify themselves racially as Hispanic. Other Hispanics consider Hispanic as an ethnic group and their race as White, Black, etc.; yet others relate more to their Indian roots and identify their race as Indian or Mestizo. The two separate questions allow these persons to report both their "ethnic" identity and their racial identity (see Table 4). The resulting data, including cross-tabulations of race and "ethnicity", meet a wide variety of data needs.<sup>7</sup>



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In light of the controversies and difficulties with the race concept, some researchers suggest that the Bureau should move to a global ethnic inquiry that may or may not include racial categories. A couple of practical concerns: how would persons, such as Blacks and American Indians, historically identified through a race question, report in such a question and would such an inquiry meet data needs; how would persons with dual identities, such as Black Puerto Ricans or Filipino Hispanics, report in such an inquiry. On the other hand, we find social scientists and data users who want to retain a separate race question to best meet data needs and provide the most complete count of each racial/"ethnic" group. The current overriding factor is that the uses of the data to implement federal legislation and programs require information on the racial groups.

### Hispanic Origin

The Hispanic origin question, as denoted by the label, attempts to identify a very specific subgroup of the total population by asking a direct question (Is this person of Spanish/Hispanic origin?). Despite the directness of the question, some users question what this question is truly measuring. At the core of this question are two key issues: 1) should we attempt to identify the groups comprising the "Hispanic" population as a single ethnic group; and 2) if we can use a single term to identify this group, what should that term be.

Gimenez (1989) has criticized the use of such blanket terms because the actual diversity of the groups undermines the validity of the meaning of the terms. Furthermore, the use of these terms creates the need to characterize the group and, thus, perpetuate stereotypes. Forbes (1990) contends that the racial diversity of this population group, many with varying amounts of Indian descent, cannot be lumped under a "Spanish" or "Hispanic" label.

Hayes-Bautista and Chapa (1987) and Trevino (1987) saw the need for a standardized term encompassing the total "Hispanic" population but disagreed about which was the appropriate term to use. Hayes-Bautista and Chapa argued for the use of the term "Latino" while Trevino preferred the term "Hispanic". Our own content testing for the 1990 Census indicated that no one term enjoyed universal approval or understanding by the Hispanic and non-Hispanic populations. We had additional concerns about the "Latino" term because of the possible attraction it might have for ethnic groups from Romance language countries such as France, Portugal and Italy who might see this term as an opportunity to identify as "Latin". Our tests showed that the term "Spanish/Hispanic", with the listing of specific response categories, was understandable to most people.

The use of a direct question to obtain a positive response from a comparatively small proportion of the population has resulted in a number of problems. This question, as we will note below, had relatively high non-response rates in the 1980 and 1990 Censuses. Most not reporting have been non-Hispanic persons but high non-response rates can affect adversely data quality. Census

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evaluation studies revealed that some non-Hispanic persons do not respond as a protest against this question. Furthermore, we have evidence from our pretests for the 1990 Census that a very small proportion of the population reporting as "Not Spanish/Hispanic" in this question later, in a reinterview situation, report some Hispanic ethnicity. We believe this reflects a negative reaction to the use of the term "Spanish/Hispanic".

The difficulty of finding a commonly understood term and having the question work effectively nationwide, however, does not obviate the need for identifying this population group. Data needs expressed directly by Public Law 94-311 and Office of Management and Budget Statistical Directive 15 and through interpretation of the Voting Rights Act and the Equal Employment Opportunity Act require the identification of the Hispanic population despite its diversity.

### **Ancestry Question**

The ancestry question represents the Bureau's most comprehensive attempt to identify a wide diversity of ethnic groups in the United States. This open-ended, self-identification question has advantages as well as disadvantages. On the one hand, McKenney, Farley and Levin (1983), in reviewing the 1980 experience with the ancestry question, note that it had several distinct advantages over uses of "indirect" measures of ethnicity such as the person's birthplace, parental birthplace (used in previous censuses) and language. They note as advantages:

... First, it provides more complete information about all individuals — not just those who were born abroad or those who had foreign-born parents. The traditional birthplace questions would identify no more than a small fraction of those persons who claimed English, Irish, or German ancestry.

Second, this new ancestry question minimizes confusion between birthplace and ancestry. That is, if an Italian-origin family lived in Argentina for two generations prior to moving to the United States, a question about birthplace would be answered Argentina, while the same individual might reply Italian to the ancestry question.

Third, the ancestry question is much more informative than the language inquiries. Ancestry, for example, distinguishes Dominicans from Cubans, although both ethnic groups have the same mother tongue (1983, 6-7).

On the other hand, the question does have some disadvantages. For example, because this question uses a purely subjective, open-ended approach, it would be subject to the concerns expressed above by Isajiw. That is, a response in the ancestry would not necessarily denote "belonging" to that group and, therefore, would not distinguish that person from others who might have reported a different ancestry group.



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Lowry (1980) echoed this concern about a subjective approach in his critique of the Census Bureau's efforts to identify ethnic groups. He cited the National Research Council's concerns about the validity and reliability of both the ancestry and Hispanic origin questions. His recommendation was to conduct studies of ethnicity in which degree of affiliation and identification with an ethnic group could be analyzed. The end result, as he saw it, was to "construct a less ambiguous and more efficient instrument for ethnic identification in future decennial censuses and sample surveys" (1980, 24). However, he did not see the decennial census as the appropriate vehicle for trying to perform such an analysis.

Farley (1990) also discussed the limitations of the data obtained from the ancestry question. One major concern was consistency in levels for groups over time. He noted that some of the largest White ethnic groups, especially "English" ancestry, had totals in the 1980 Census that were noticeably inconsistent with those from sample surveys, most interestingly the November 1979 Current Population Survey that was taken only five months before the census. Farley also indicated that the 1980 Content Reinterview Survey results confirmed the inconsistent reporting of English and other western European ancestries such as Irish, Scottish and French. He attributed the lack of consistency to Whites whose ancestors had come to this country many generations ago and for whom ethnicity had become as Gans (1979) called "symbolic". (The 1980 questionnaire design also contributed to the overreporting of English.) Farley saw the 1990 Census as a crucial test of whether the Census Bureau should continue to ask such a question.

Liebersohn and Waters (1988) analyzed the 1980 Census ancestry question in the context of what they saw as four ways of viewing a person's ethnic origin or ancestry. These four views were: 1) what are a person's ancestral roots if one could actually trace back to when his/her ancestor first came to the New World; 2) what does the person "believe" his/her ancestry to be; 3) with what origin (or origins) does the person identify; and 4) what ethnic identity do others attribute to that person (1988, 22-23). These views are interrelated and one of these may be stronger than the others depending on the degree of assimilation.

Liebersohn and Waters stated that the 1980 ancestry question contained a certain amount of ambiguity because it mixed two of these four views. More specifically, the question obtained the person's assessment of his/her ancestry but the instructions indicated that the respondent should print the ancestry group with which the person "identified" (view 3 above). As a result of research, testing and extensive consultations with ethnic experts such as Liebersohn and Waters, the Bureau made several important revisions to the question and instructions for the 1990 Census to make their intent clearer.

White (1990) expressed the concern that the 1990 instruction for ancestry was overly broad by including "country of birth" as one of the equivalents of ancestry. Our inclusion of country of birth in the ancestry instructions, however, reflects the diversity of views that U.S. respondents have toward ethnicity.



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### Summary

In summary, the diversity of definitions and issues surrounding ethnicity as well as the flux inherent in the reporting of ethnicity make it difficult to collect "ethnic" data that have optimum levels of validity and reliability. Lieberman and Waters did, however, view the 1980 question on ancestry as a bold innovation, providing data to address issues concerning the melting pot/pluralism debate and on the current status of the ethnicity of the U.S. population.

We have asked three separate questions — race, Hispanic origin and ancestry — that obtain information on various aspects of ethnicity. Each question was designed to meet different data needs. Each question has advantages as well as disadvantages.

### **Identifying ethnicity in the future**

How do we address the issues discussed in the previous sections as we think ahead toward the future, especially the 2000 Census? As we answer this question, we will have to keep in mind four key factors that will strongly influence possible approaches for identifying race and ethnicity in the future: 1) development of a consensus among the "key players" about the best approach for identifying race/"ethnicity"; 2) use of sound principles of social science research; 3) pressure to maintain comparability of formats and concepts; and 4) data collection technologies.

A most important first step will be the consultations in developing a consensus among key users of census ethnic data about the "best" questions to ask in the future. There are many persons and institutions — data users, community organizations and federal agencies — who influence determination of questionnaire content. By law, the Bureau must submit the questions to Congress for review. As Choldin (1986) notes in his analysis of how the Bureau developed the Hispanic questions in the 1970 and 1980 Censuses, the Census Bureau cannot develop questions in a vacuum: "The Census Bureau is a part of the federal government, which defines and constrains it .... Congressional committees have oversight over the Bureau, which is governed by certain federal acts. The Bureau may be criticized by Congresspersons, by the press, and by segments of the public, and on occasion it has been challenged in court. Given this situation, census staff can not be oblivious to socio-political concerns" (1986, 403).

Developing a consensus has become a crucial component in determining questionnaire content, especially with the large amount of federal, state and local money that is tied to population counts and characteristics. Concerns are the growing pressures from groups with different views — such as the ethnic groups not identified specifically by the race and Hispanic questions to have some version of the ancestry question on the 100 percent form or a combined ancestry/race/Hispanic origin question; groups who want to maintain the status quo or increase the number of groups listed in the race and "ethnic" questions; and groups who want a mixed racial classification in the race item.

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Comparability is an important consideration in determining questionnaire content. Pressure to maintain the status quo will probably come from many sources: groups fearing that change may reduce the size of their group or affect their "perceived" official recognition in the census, researchers who want to study change in characteristics over time and federal, state and local agencies. Obviously, if questionnaire items change significantly between censuses, the ability to distinguish the amount of and reasons for intercensal change diminishes. On the other hand, if research and testing show clearly that a significantly revised question provides higher quality data, the Bureau will have to weigh the quality and comparability factors very carefully.

Principles of sound scientific research should be the main impetus for determining questionnaire content. More in-depth evaluations of the 1990 Census race and "ethnic" items which will be available later, along with the results of this conference, will be important in outlining the type of research to be conducted in the 1990s.

In this regard, we may need to look at several different alternative approaches to identifying ethnicity in our decennial censuses to address the problems identified in our evaluations. We certainly will need to do more research on the way persons classify themselves racially and "ethnically"; sequencing of questions; terminology in our question wording and response categories; ordering of categories; and more direct instructions. After consultations with data users, we need to investigate the possibility of new approaches to measuring ethnicity that may involve the use of multi-part questions that tap into key components of what respondents believe is their ethnicity.

The objective of any research must be to make the intent of the question clearer, improve response levels and therefore obtain high-quality data.

Breakthroughs in data capture technology may make certain tasks, such as collecting and tabulating information in a combined ancestry/race/Hispanic origin question on a 100 percent basis, possible. Even with technological breakthroughs, the Bureau will still need to address fundamental issues concerning comparability, legislative requirements, quality of the data and consensus among key data users before any changes in question concepts and formats can be made.

These do not exhaust the issues the Bureau will face as it prepares for the 2000 Census but they provide a hint of the formidable task the Bureau will undertake in developing the questions on ethnicity for the future.

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### Notes

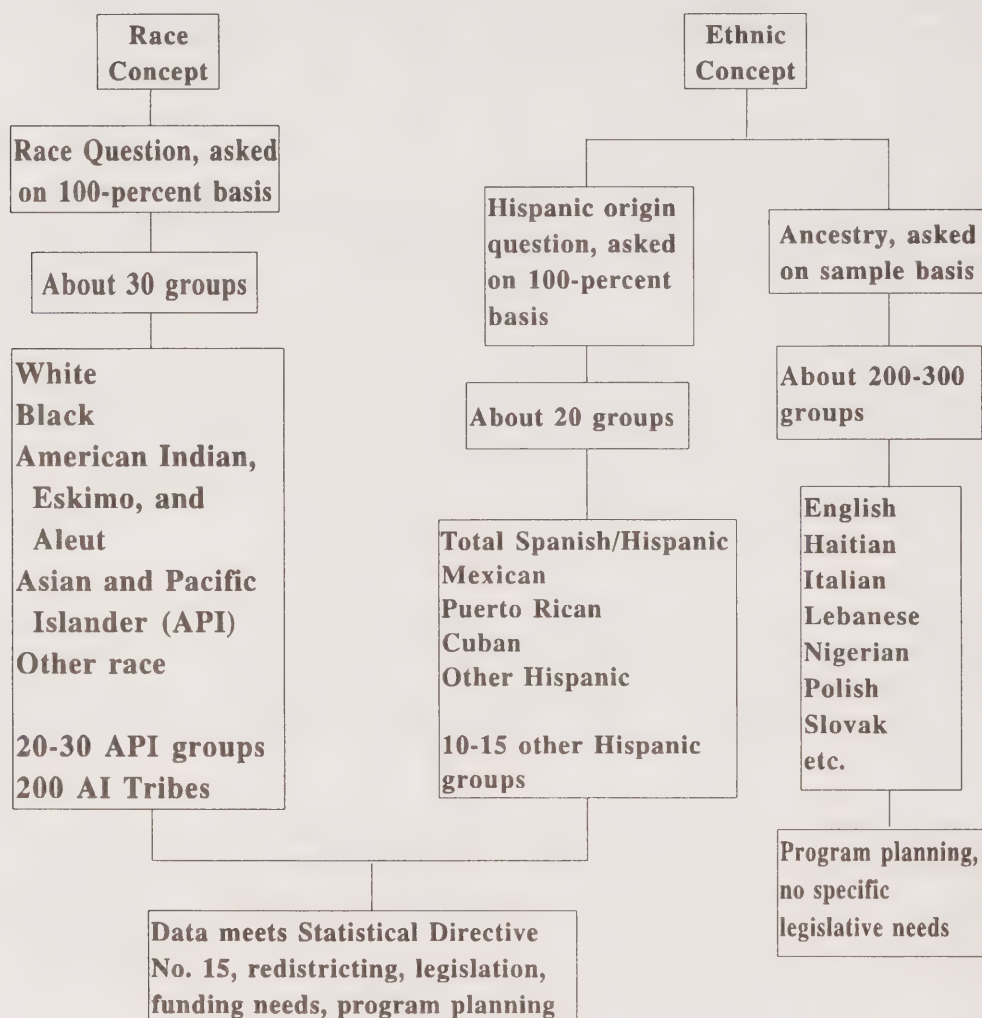
1. The Bureau of the Census used the self-identification approach on a limited basis for the first time in the 1960 Census. The procedure was expanded in each succeeding census and by 1980 it was used throughout the country.
2. Federal Statistical Directive No. 15 and federal agencies require data on the *total* Asian and Pacific Islander (API) population. In 1980, only information for the nine API groups listed separately on the questionnaire were available on a 100 percent basis. Information for the *total* API population was available only from sample tabulations.
3. Participants at a 1985 Conference on Race and Ethnicity strongly recommended that the Census Bureau not test a combined Hispanic/ancestry question because the proposed question would be confusing and divisive to the public and also would not provide accurate reporting of Hispanic individual groups on a 100 percent basis.
4. Evaluation studies of the reporting in the 1980 Spanish origin item indicated that the misreporting in the Mexican origin category, primarily by White and Black persons, generally occurred in areas where the Hispanic population was sparse. The 1980 data for the Mexican origin population or for the Hispanic population at the national level was not seriously affected by the misreporting problem.
5. In 1980, the prominence of the term "English" in the question on language (which immediately preceded the ancestry question) and the listing of English as the second example in the ancestry question may have influenced respondents to report English, primarily as a single entry.
6. In 1940, about 26 percent of the population was foreign born or native of foreign or mixed or mixed parentage; the figure was about 16 percent in 1970.



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7. Some data users need data for the total of each racial group, regardless of their Hispanic ethnicity; for example, federal programs for American Indians generally require data for the *total* American Indian population based on the responses to the race question. Other data users need cross-tabulations of race and Hispanic origin so as to obtain information for groups such as White non-Hispanics or Black non-Hispanics.

**Figure 1. Classifications Used by the Census Bureau**



**Figure 2. Race Question for the 1990 Census**

<p><b>4. Race</b>          Fill ONE circle for the race that the person considers himself/herself to be.</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">If <b>Indian (Amer.)</b>, print the name of the enrolled or principal tribe. _____ ➔</p>  <p style="margin-left: 40px;">If <b>Other Asian or Pacific Islander (API)</b>, print one group, for example: Hmong, Fijian, Laotian, Thai, Tongan, Pakistani, Cambodian, and so on. _____ ➔</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">If <b>Other race</b>, print race. _____ ➔</p>	<div style="margin-bottom: 10px;"> <input type="radio"/> White  <input type="radio"/> Black or Negro  <input type="radio"/> Indian (Amer.) (Print the name of the enrolled or principal tribe.) ↓  <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 25px; margin-top: 5px;"></div> </div> <div style="margin-bottom: 10px;"> <input type="radio"/> Eskimo  <input type="radio"/> Aleut  <div style="text-align: center; margin: 5px 0;"><u>Asian or Pacific Islander (API)</u></div> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td><input type="radio"/> Chinese</td> <td><input type="radio"/> Japanese</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="radio"/> Filipino</td> <td><input type="radio"/> Asian Indian</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="radio"/> Hawaiian</td> <td><input type="radio"/> Samoan</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="radio"/> Korean</td> <td><input type="radio"/> Guamanian</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="radio"/> Vietnamese</td> <td><input type="radio"/> Other API ↓</td> </tr> </table> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 25px; margin-top: 5px;"></div> </div> <div> <input type="radio"/> Other race (Print race) ↑         </div>	<input type="radio"/> Chinese	<input type="radio"/> Japanese	<input type="radio"/> Filipino	<input type="radio"/> Asian Indian	<input type="radio"/> Hawaiian	<input type="radio"/> Samoan	<input type="radio"/> Korean	<input type="radio"/> Guamanian	<input type="radio"/> Vietnamese	<input type="radio"/> Other API ↓
<input type="radio"/> Chinese	<input type="radio"/> Japanese										
<input type="radio"/> Filipino	<input type="radio"/> Asian Indian										
<input type="radio"/> Hawaiian	<input type="radio"/> Samoan										
<input type="radio"/> Korean	<input type="radio"/> Guamanian										
<input type="radio"/> Vietnamese	<input type="radio"/> Other API ↓										

### Instructions for Question 4

Fill ONE circle for the race each person considers himself/herself to be.

If you fill the "Indian (Amer.)" circle, print the name of the tribe or tribes in which the person is enrolled. If the person is not enrolled in a tribe, print the name of the principal tribe(s).

If you fill the "Other API" circle [under Asian or Pacific Islander (API)], "only" print the name of the group to which the person belongs. For example, the "Other API" category includes persons who identify as Burmese, Fijian, Hmong, Indonesian, Laotian, Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Tongan, Thai, Cambodian, Sri Lankan, and so on.

If you fill the "Other race" circle, be sure to print the name of the race.

If the person considers himself/herself to be "White," "Black or Negro," "Eskimo," or "Aleut," fill one circle only. Please do not print the race in the boxes.

The "Black or Negro" category also includes persons who identify as African-American, Afro-American, Haitian, Jamaican, West Indian, Nigerian, and so on.

All persons, regardless of citizenship status, should answer this question.



### Instructions for Question 7

If you fill the "Yes, other Spanish/Hispanic" circle, print one group.

A person who is not of Spanish/Hispanic origin should answer this question by filling the "No (not Spanish/Hispanic)" circle. Note that the term "Mexican-Am." refers only to persons of Mexican origin or ancestry.

All persons, regardless of citizenship status, should answer this question.

**Figure 4. Ancestry Question for the 1990 Census**

<p>13. What is this person's ancestry or ethnic origin? ↓ (See instruction guide for further information.)</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 25px; width: 400px; margin: 10px auto;"></div> <p>(For example: German, Italian, Afro-Amer., Croatian, Cape Verdean, Dominican, Ecuadoran, Haitian, Cajun, French Canadian, Jamaican, Korean, Lebanese, Mexican, Nigerian, Irish, Polish, Slovak, Taiwanese, Thai, Ukrainian, etc.)</p>
---

**Instructions for Question 13**

Print the ancestry group. Ancestry refers to the person's ethnic origin or descent, "roots," or heritage. Ancestry also may refer to the country of birth of the person or the person's parents or ancestors before their arrival in the United States. All persons, regardless of citizenship status, should answer this question.

Persons who have more than one origin and cannot identify with a single group may report two ancestry groups (for example, German-Irish).

Be specific. For example, print whether West Indian, Asian Indian, or American Indian. West Indian includes persons whose ancestors came from Jamaica, Trinidad, Haiti, etc. Distinguish Cape Verdean from Portuguese; French Canadian from Canadian; and Dominican Republic from Dominica Island.

A religious group should not be reported as a person's ancestry.

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**Figure 5. Population Items Related to Ethnicity on General Schedules of Decennial Censuses: 1850 to 1990**

Demographic Characteristic	1850	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990
Race	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Hispanic origin	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Xs	X	X
Ancestry	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Xs	Xs
Place of birth	X <sup>1</sup>	X <sup>1</sup>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Xs	Xs	Xs <sup>2</sup>	Xs	Xs	Xs
Place of birth of parents	-	-	X <sup>3</sup>	X	X	X	X	X	X	Xs	Xs	Xs	Xs	-	-
Language:															
Non-English language <sup>4</sup>	-	-	-	-	X	-	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	Xs	Xs
Mother tongue <sup>5</sup>	-	-	-	-	-	-	X	X	X	Xs	-	Xs	Xs	-	-

X Item included on all questionnaires.

Xs Item included on sample questionnaires.

- Item not included.

<sup>1</sup> Question asked of free inhabitants only.

<sup>2</sup> In 1960, place of birth was asked generally on a sample basis, but on a 100-percent basis in New York and Puerto Rico.

<sup>3</sup> Question was only whether parents were foreign-born.

<sup>4</sup> In 1890 and 1910, the question was simply whether persons could speak English. In 1910, 1980, and 1990 the questions, obtained information on ability to speak English and non-English language spoken.

<sup>5</sup> In 1910 and 1920, obtained mother tongue of respondent and his/her foreign-born parents.

Source: Adapted from Passel and Levin (1987); U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1973. Population and Housing Inquiries in U.S. Decennial Censuses: 1790-1970, Working Paper No. 39, Washington, D.C.: Table 1, pp. 5-9.



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**Table 1. Race for the United States: 1990 and 1980**

Race	1990		1980		Number Change	Percent Change
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent		
All persons	248,709,873	100.0	226,545,805	100.0	22,164,068	9.8
White	199,686,070	80.3	188,371,622	83.1	11,314,448	6.0
Black	29,986,060	12.1	26,495,025	11.7	3,491,035	13.2
American Indian, Eskimo, and Aleut	1,959,234	0.8	1,420,400	0.6	538,834	37.9
American Indian	1,878,285	0.8	1,364,033	0.6	514,252	37.7
Eskimo	57,152	-	42,162	-	14,990	35.6
Aleut	23,797	-	14,205	-	9,592	67.5
Asian and Pacific Islander	7,273,662	2.9	3,500,439 <sup>1</sup>	1.5	3,773,223	107.8
Chinese	1,645,472	0.7	806,040	0.4	839,432	104.1
Filipino	1,406,770	0.6	774,652	0.3	632,118	81.6
Japanese	847,562	0.3	700,974	0.3	146,588	20.9
Asian Indian	815,447	0.3	361,531	0.2	453,916	125.6
Korean	798,849	0.3	354,593	0.2	444,256	125.3
Vietnamese	614,547	0.2	261,729	0.1	352,818	134.8
Hawaiian	211,014	0.1	166,814	0.1	44,200	26.5
Samoan	62,964	-	41,948	-	21,016	50.1
Guamanian	49,345	-	32,158	-	17,187	53.4
Other Asian and Pacific Island	821,692	0.3	NA	NA	NA	NA
Other race	9,804,847	3.9	6,758,319	3.0	3,046,528	45.1

NA: Not Available

<sup>1</sup> The number for Asians or Pacific Islanders shown in this table are not entirely consistent with 1990 counts. The 1980 count of 3,500,439 Asians or Pacific Islanders based on 100- percent tabulations includes only the nine specific Asian or Pacific Islander groups listed separately in the 1980 race item. The 1980 total Asian or Pacific Islander population of 3,726,440 from sample tabulations is comparable to the 1990 count; these figures include groups not listed separately in the race item on the 1980 census form.

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Summary Tape File 1, United States Summary and 1980 Census of Population, General Population Characteristics, United States Summary.

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**Table 2. Allocation Rates for the Race Question by Region: 1990 and 1980**

Region	1990	1980
United States...	2.7	1.5
Northeast.....	3.2	1.4
Midwest.....	1.9	1.3
South.....	2.4	1.4
West.....	3.5	1.9

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1990 Census Summary Tape File 2 and 1980 Census, General Population Characteristics, United States Summary.

**Table 3. Number and Presence of Write-In Responses to Race Categories Requiring Write-In Responses: 1990**

Circle Marked	Total	No write-in	Write-ins		
			Total	Consistent with circle marked	Not consistent with circle marked
Percent of Total					
American Indian.....	100.0	8.7	91.3	83.2	8.1
Other API.....	100.0	3.0	97.0	44.7	52.3
Other race.....	100.0	67.1	32.9	18.7	14.2
Percent of Write-ins					
American Indian.....	X	X	100.0	91.1	8.9
Other API.....	X	X	100.0	46.1	53.9
Other race.....	X	X	100.0	56.7	43.3

(X) - Not applicable

Note: Universe for this table excludes "substituted" or "wholly allocated" persons; figures on consistency are based on write-ins prior to the automated coding and editing operations.

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, unpublished tabulations from the 1990 Census.

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**Table 4. Race by Hispanic Origin for the United States: 1990**

Race	Total population	Hispanic origin	Not of Hispanic origin
<b>Percent by Race</b>			
Total.....	100.0	100.0	100.0
White.....	80.3	51.7	83.1
Black.....	12.1	3.4	12.9
American Indian, Eskimo, and Aleut.....	0.8	0.7	0.8
Asian and Pacific Islander.....	2.9	1.4	3.1
Other race.....	3.9	42.7	0.1
<b>Percent by Hispanic Origin<sup>1</sup></b>			
Total.....	100.0	9.0	91.0
White.....	100.0	5.8	94.2
Black.....	100.0	2.6	97.4
American Indian, Eskimo, and Aleut.....	100.0	8.4	91.6
Asian and Pacific Islander.....	100.0	4.2	95.8
Other race.....	100.0	97.5	2.5

<sup>1</sup> Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1990 Census Summary Tape File 2 and CP-1, General Population Characteristics. (Forthcoming).



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**Table 5. Population by Hispanic Origin for the United States: 1990 and 1980**

United States	1990		1980		Number change	Percent change
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent		
Total Population.....	248,709,873	100.0	226,545,805	100.0	22,164,068	9.8
Hispanic Origin.....	22,354,059	9.0	14,608,673	6.4	7,745,386	53.0
Mexican.....	13,495,938	5.4	8,740,439	3.9	4,755,499	54.4
Puerto Rican.....	2,727,754	1.1	2,013,945	0.9	713,809	35.4
Cuban.....	1,043,932	0.4	803,226	0.4	240,706	30.0
Other Hispanic.....	5,086,435	2.0	3,051,063	1.3	2,035,372	66.7
Not Hispanic.....	226,355,814	91.0	211,937,132	93.6	14,418,682	6.8

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1990 Census Summary Tape File 1 and 1980 Census, General Population Characteristics, United States Summary.

**Table 6. Allocation Rates for the Hispanic Origin Question by Region: 1990 and 1980**

United States Regions	1990		1980	
	100-percent	Sample	100-percent	Sample
United States.....	10.0	3.5	4.2	2.4
Northeast.....	11.0	3.8	4.0	2.0
Midwest.....	10.0	3.5	4.1	2.1
South.....	11.0	3.6	5.1	2.8
West.....	7.0	3.0	3.2	1.8

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1990 Census Summary Tape File 2 and 1980 Census, General Population Characteristics, United States Summary.

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**Table 7. Type of Ancestry Response for Regions, Divisions and States: 1990**

Number	Total population	Persons with at Least One Ancestry Reported				Ancestry Not Reported
		Total	Ancestries except "American"	"American" Ancestry	Not Classified	
United States.....	248,709,873	224,788,502	209,977,301	13,039,560	1,771,641	23,921,371
Northeast.....	50,809,229	46,954,109	45,391,149	1,376,404	186,556	3,855,120
New England.....	13,206,943	12,321,796	11,835,956	428,336	57,504	885,147
Middle Atlantic.....	37,602,286	34,632,313	33,555,193	948,068	129,052	2,969,973
Midwest.....	59,668,632	54,836,104	51,921,178	2,318,991	595,935	4,832,528
East North Central.....	42,008,942	38,592,902	36,439,423	1,663,163	490,316	3,416,040
West North Central.....	17,659,690	16,243,202	15,481,755	655,828	105,619	1,416,488
South.....	85,445,930	74,344,302	65,776,728	7,899,791	667,783	11,101,628
South Atlantic.....	43,566,853	37,873,608	33,834,841	3,775,954	262,813	5,693,245
East South Central.....	15,176,284	12,599,551	10,110,506	2,324,035	165,010	2,576,733
West South Central.....	26,702,793	23,871,143	21,831,381	1,799,802	239,960	2,831,650
West.....	52,786,082	48,653,987	46,888,246	1,444,374	321,367	4,132,095
Mountain.....	13,658,776	12,610,605	12,065,852	431,713	113,040	1,048,171
Pacific.....	39,127,306	36,043,382	34,822,394	1,012,661	208,327	3,083,924
Percent (by area)						
United States.....	100.0	90.4	84.4	5.2	0.7	9.6
Northeast.....	100.0	92.4	89.3	2.7	0.4	7.6
New England.....	100.0	93.3	89.6	3.2	0.4	6.7
Middle Atlantic.....	100.0	92.1	89.2	2.5	0.3	7.9
Midwest.....	100.0	91.9	87.0	3.9	1.0	8.1
East North Central.....	100.0	91.9	86.7	4.0	1.2	8.1
West North Central.....	100.0	92.0	87.7	3.7	0.6	8.0
South.....	100.0	87.0	77.0	9.2	0.8	13.0
South Atlantic.....	100.0	86.9	77.7	8.7	0.6	13.1
East South Central.....	100.0	83.0	66.6	15.3	1.1	17.0
West South Central.....	100.0	89.4	81.8	6.7	0.9	10.6
West.....	100.0	92.2	88.8	2.7	0.6	7.8
Mountain.....	100.0	92.3	88.3	3.2	0.8	7.7
Pacific.....	100.0	92.1	89.0	2.6	0.5	7.9
Percent (by type)						
United States.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Northeast.....	20.4	20.9	21.6	10.6	10.5	16.1
New England.....	5.3	5.5	5.6	3.3	3.2	3.7
Middle Atlantic.....	15.1	15.4	16.0	7.3	7.3	12.4
Midwest.....	24.0	24.4	24.7	17.8	33.6	20.2
East North Central.....	16.9	17.2	17.4	12.8	27.7	14.3
West North Central.....	7.1	7.2	7.4	5.0	6.0	5.9
South.....	34.4	33.1	31.3	60.6	37.7	46.4
South Atlantic.....	17.5	16.8	16.1	29.0	14.8	23.8
East South Central.....	6.1	5.6	4.8	17.8	9.3	10.8
West South Central.....	10.7	10.6	10.4	13.8	13.5	11.8
West.....	21.2	21.6	22.3	11.1	18.1	17.3
Mountain.....	5.5	5.6	5.7	3.3	6.4	4.4
Pacific.....	15.7	16.0	16.6	7.8	11.8	12.9

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, "Ancestry of the Population by State: 1990" (Forthcoming).

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**Table 8. Type of Ancestry Response by Regions, Divisions, and States: 1990 and 1980**

	1990			1980		
	"American" Ancestry	Ancestry Not Classified	Ancestry Not Reported	"American" Ancestry	Ancestry Not Classified	Ancestry Not Reported
United States.....	5.2	0.7	9.6	5.9	0.8	10.2
Northeast.....	2.7	0.4	7.6	3.9	1.0	7.7
New England.....	3.2	0.4	6.7	3.9	0.8	7.5
Middle Atlantic.....	2.5	0.3	7.9	3.9	1.0	7.7
Midwest.....	3.9	1.0	8.1	5.1	0.5	9.2
East North Central.....	4.0	1.2	8.1	5.1	0.5	9.5
West North Central.....	3.7	0.6	8.0	4.9	0.6	8.6
South.....	9.2	0.8	13.0	9.0	0.8	13.7
South Atlantic.....	8.7	0.6	13.1	8.7	0.8	13.4
East South Central.....	15.3	1.1	17.0	12.6	0.6	14.9
West South Central.....	6.7	0.9	10.6	7.4	0.8	13.5
West.....	2.7	0.6	7.8	3.7	0.9	8.4
Mountain.....	3.2	0.8	7.7	4.3	0.8	8.4
Pacific.....	2.6	0.5	7.9	3.5	1.0	8.4

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, "Ancestry of the Population by State: 1990," (Forthcoming); Census of Population, "Ancestry of the Population by State: 1980," Series PC80-1-10.



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**Table 9. Selected Ancestries Reported: 1990 and 1980 (Ancestries ranked by size of 1990 population)**

	Number Reporting in Millions		Percent of Total Population	
	1990	1980	1990	1980
United States				
German .....	58.0	49.2	23.3	26.1
Irish .....	38.7	40.2	15.6	21.3
English .....	32.7	49.6	13.1	26.3
Afro-American .....	23.8	21.0	9.6	11.1
Italian .....	14.7	12.2	5.9	6.5
American .....	13.0	13.3	5.0	5.9
Mexican .....	11.6	7.7	4.7	4.1
French .....	10.3	12.9	4.1	6.9
Polish .....	9.4	8.2	3.8	8.2
American Indian .....	8.7	6.7	3.5	3.6
Dutch .....	6.2	6.3	2.5	3.4
Scotch-Irish .....	5.6	NA	2.3	NA
Scottish .....	5.4	10.0	2.2	5.3
Swedish .....	4.7	4.3	1.9	4.3
Norwegian .....	3.9	3.5	1.6	1.8
Spanish/Hispanic .....	3.1	2.7	1.2	1.4
Russian .....	3.0	2.8	1.2	1.5
French Canadian .....	2.2	0.8	0.9	0.4
Welsh .....	2.0	1.7	0.8	0.9
Puerto Rican .....	2.0	1.4	0.8	0.8
Slovak .....	1.9	0.8	0.8	0.4
Danish .....	1.6	1.5	0.7	0.8
Hungarian .....	1.6	1.8	0.6	0.9
Chinese .....	1.5	0.9	0.6	0.5
Filipino .....	1.5	0.8	0.6	0.4
Czech .....	1.3	1.9	0.5	1.0
Portuguese .....	1.2	1.0	0.5	0.5
British .....	1.1	NA	0.4	NA
Greek .....	1.1	1.0	0.4	0.5
Swiss .....	1.0	1.0	0.4	0.5
Japanese .....	1.0	0.8	0.4	0.4
Austrian .....	0.9	0.9	0.4	0.5
Ukrainian .....	0.7	0.7	0.3	0.4
Canadian .....	0.6	0.5	0.2	0.2
Lebanese .....	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.2

NA - Not Available

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, "Ancestry of the Population by State: 1990" (Forthcoming).

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**Appendix A**

- Facsimiles of Ethnic Questions Used in the Current Population Survey
- Race Question Proposed for the 1990 Census

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**Facsimiles of Ethnic Questions used in the Current Population Survey**

**MARCH 1972 CPS**

52. What is...’s origin or descent?  
(Show Flash Card or read List)

German	.....	o	Mexican, Chicano	.....	o
Italian	.....	o	Puerto Rican	.....	o
Irish	.....	o	Cuban	.....	o
French	.....	o	Central or So. Amer	.....	o
Polish	.....	o	Other Spanish	.....	o
Russian	.....	o	Negro	.....	o
English, Scot,			Other	.....	o
Welsh	.....	o	Don’t know	.....	o

**MARCH 1973 CPS**

52. What is...’s origin or descent?  
(Show Flash Card or read List)

German	.....	o	Mexican American	.....	o	
Italian	.....	o	Chicano	.....	o	
Irish	.....	o	Mexican (Mexicano)	.....	o	(Ask 53)
French	.....	o	Puerto Rican	.....	o	
Polish	.....	o	Cuban	.....	o	
Russian	.....	o	Central or So. Amer.	.....	o	
English	.....	o	Other Spanish	.....	o	
Scottish	.....	o	Negro or Black	.....	o	
Welsh	.....	o	Other (Specify below)	.....	o	
Don’t know	.....	o				

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**Race Question Proposed for the 1990 Census**

<p><b>4. Race</b> Fill ONE circle for the person consider himself/herself to be.</p> <p>If Asian or Pacific Islander, print one group.</p> <p>If Indian (Amer.), print the name of the enrolled or principal tribe.</p> <p>If Other race, print race.</p>	<p><input type="radio"/> White <input type="radio"/> Black or Negro <input type="radio"/> Asian or Pacific Islander (Print one group, for example: Chinese, Filipino, Asian Indian, Japanese, Laotian, Hawaiian, Korean, Samoan, Vietnamese, etc.) ↓</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 25px; width: 100%;"></div> <p><input type="radio"/> Indian (Amer.) Print the name of the enrolled or principal tribe) ↓</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 25px; width: 100%;"></div> <p><input type="radio"/> Eskimo <input type="radio"/> Aleut <input type="radio"/> Other Race (Print race) ↓</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 25px; width: 100%;"></div>
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**Instruction for Question 4**

4. Fill one circle for the group the person considers himself/herself to be.

If you fill the Asian and Pacific Islander circle. Be sure to print the name of one group. The Asian and Pacific Islander category includes such groups as Chinese, Hawaiian, Asian Indian, Burmese, Cambodian, Filipino, Fijian, Guamanian, Hmong, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Pakistani, Samoan, Tongan, Thai, and Vietnamese.

If you fill the Indian (Amer.) circle, be sure to print the name of the tribe or tribes in which the person is enrolled. If the person is not enrolled in a tribe, print the name of the principal tribe or tribes.

If you fill the Other race circle, be sure to print the name of the race.

All persons, regardless of citizenship status, should answer this question.





# *Measuring Ethnicity in Canadian Censuses*

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## **Introduction**

This paper assesses Canada's experience in the collection of census ethnic origin data and the measurement of ethnicity. The first part provides a general review of Canada's measurement of ethnic and racial origin phenomena over the period 1767 to 1961. The second section examines the formulation of census ethnic questions and the measurement issues that have concerned Statistics Canada since 1971.

The influence of legislation and policy initiatives on ethnic origin data collection are next discussed. Specifically, question and measurement changes inspired by Canada's multiculturalism policy and employment equity legislation are reviewed.

The concepts of ethnicity measured by Canada's ethnic origin question are then introduced. This section examines the concept of ethnic fluidity and its impact on measurement of ethnicity in Canada.

Continuing with the notion of ethnic flux, the paper looks at coding and ethnic classifications. Technical and operational issues related to the statistical processing of ethnic data are then reviewed. The last section addresses data output and presentation details.

It is the authors' intention to describe as completely as possible Canada's collection and measurement of ethnicity. We hope that this will facilitate comparisons of measurement of ethnicity in different countries.

## **Ethnicity in Canada's Census, 1767-1961**

### **First Censuses: 1767-1861**

The collection of ethnic and racial origin data in Canada's censuses has a long history. The British North America colonies of Nova Scotia and St. John Island [now called Prince Edward Island] were the first to identify the ethnic and racial origins of the population in their censuses of 1767. The next pre-Confederation census to inquire about the origins of inhabitants was the 1824 Census of New Brunswick which classified the population on the basis of race (Table 1).

## *Measuring Ethnicity in Canadian Censuses*

**Table 1: List of Ethnic and Racial Groups Shown in Canada's 1767, 1824, 1851 and 1861 Censuses**

1767		1824	1851 and 1861
Nova Scotia	St. John Island (P.E.I.)	New Brunswick	Upper and Lower Canada
<b>Ethnic Origins</b> English Irish Scotch American German Acadian Not given	<b>Ethnic Origins</b> English Irish Scotch American German Acadian Not Given	<b>Ethnic Origins</b> (none listed)	<b>Ethnic origins/Birth Place</b> England and Wales Scotland Ireland Canada, French origin Canada, Not of French origin United States Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island New Brunswick Newfoundland West Indies East Indies Germany and Holland France Italy and Greece Spain and Portugal Sweden and Norway Russia, Poland and Prussia Switzerland Austria and Hungary Guernsey Jersey and Other British Isles Coloured persons Indians Other places Born at sea Birth place not know
<b>Race</b> White Indian Negro	<b>Race</b> White Indian Negro	<b>Race</b> White Coloured	

Source: Census of Nova Scotia (1767), Census of St. John Island (P.E.I.) (1767), Census of New Brunswick (1824), Census of Upper and Lower Canada, 1851 and 1861.



Later, the censuses of 1851 and 1861 Upper [now Ontario] and Lower [now Quebec] Canada used a combination of birthplace and ethnic origin identifiers to categorize the population. Information was published on some 25 countries and origins, including data on the origins of Canadian-born populations.<sup>1</sup> According to Ryder (1956, 653), these early censuses had a major influence on the collection of origin data in ensuing national censuses.

### **Post-Confederation Censuses, 1871-1881**

Since Confederation, information on the ethnic or racial origins of the population has been collected in every national census (Table 2), except 1891<sup>2</sup> when a question on the French Canadian population replaced the one on origins.

Enumeration schedules and published data suggest that the 1871 and 1881 Censuses followed the practice established in the pre-Confederation collection of origin data. For instance, few instructions were given to enumerators, although examples of groups were provided, such as "French, English, Irish, Scottish, African, Native Indian, German." Information on the birthplace of Canadian residents was collected separately.

### **Racial Origins, Censuses 1901-1941**

Canada's ethnic origin question was restructured for the 1901 Census, and these changes remained in effect until 1946. Kralt (1990, 15) attributes these adjustments to the failure of the 1891 Census to accurately collect data on French Canadian and Acadian populations. As well, there had been a significant increase in immigration, especially from Eastern Europe. No doubt, at the time, there was an interest in obtaining data on these groups.

The 1901 Census measured the "racial" origins of the population. For respondents of European ancestry, instructions to enumerators specified that the ethnic background of the father determined a respondent's origin. However, this rule did not apply to respondents of mixed European/non-European origins.

## *Measuring Ethnicity in Canadian Censuses*

**Table 2: Historical Overview of Canada's Collection of Ethnic and Racial Origin Data, by Census Year, 1767 to 1991**

Census Year	Origins	Race	Racial Origins	Ethnic Origins
1767	X	X		
1824		X		
1851	X			
1861	X			
1871	X			
1881	X			
1901			X	
1911			X	
1921			X	
1931			X	
1941			X	
1951				X
1961				X
1971				X
1981				X
1986				X
1991				X

Source: Census of Nova Scotia (1767), Census of St. John Island [P.E.I.] (1767), Census of New Brunswick (1824), Census of Upper and Lower Canada, 1851 and 1861. Statistics Canada, *Canada's Census Ethno-cultural Questions on 1871-1991*. (1991).

As well, instructions regarding aboriginal origin varied considerably over the period 1901 to 1941. In 1901, respondents with both aboriginal and European origins were to report "half-breed." This rule was changed for the 1911 to 1931 Censuses when respondents of mixed aboriginal/European background were instructed to report the mother's aboriginal origin and tribe.<sup>3</sup> But again in 1941, persons of mixed aboriginal/European origins were to report "half-breed."

During the period 1901 to 1941, persons of non-European background were asked to report the appropriate racial group. This also applied to respondents having mixed European/non-European (not aboriginal) origins. This population was asked to report "Negro or Mongolian (Chinese or Japanese) as the case may be."

Except for respondents of mixed European/non-European backgrounds and those of mixed aboriginal/European origins, racial origin was to be traced along the paternal lines. In all cases, however, only one group was to be reported.

From 1901 to 1941, racial origin data were published in considerable detail. Numerous groups were included in the data tables which cross-tabulated demographic, cultural, citizenship, linguistic and economic information.<sup>4</sup> Several monographs were also written (Hurd 1931; Hurd 1941). Publication of such information permitted researchers to assess the contributions made to the economy and to society by ethnic communities and recent immigrants.

### **Linguistic Definition of Ethnicity, Censuses 1951-1961**

After the Second World War, the notion of racial origin was abandoned as a census classification principle. In the 1946 Censuses of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, the term "race" was replaced by "ethnic" and since 1951, the terms "ethnic group" and "ethnic and cultural origin" have been used in national censuses.

Also at this time began the introduction of language as an important factor in determining ethnicity. The following section will discuss these changes.

#### 1951 Census

Beginning in 1951, the heritage language of the paternal ancestor defined the respondent's ethnic origin. Instructions to enumerators specified that respondents were to be asked about the language spoken by the male ancestor when he first immigrated to North America. If language was not of assistance, then the enumerator was to inquire, "On the father's side what was your origin?"



## *Measuring Ethnicity in Canadian Censuses*

In 1951, for the first time, precoded ethnic groups were listed on the census schedule (Appendix A). The list of European groups included a mark-in entry for "Jewish."<sup>5</sup> Native Indian groups also appeared in the list. Non-European groups were not shown, although the group "Negro" was included in the enumerators' instructions as an ethnic group.

In 1951, the specification of aboriginal origins was complex, especially for persons of mixed aboriginal/non-aboriginal background. In such a case, residence on- or off-reserves was to be considered. If the respondent lived on a reserve, then native Indian was to be indicated; if the respondent lived off-reserve, then the origin of the paternal ancestor was to be reported.

### 1961 Census

The 1961 ethnic origin question asked: "To which ethnic or cultural group did you or your paternal ancestor belong on first coming to this continent?" Thirty ethnic groups were listed on the question in alphabetical order (according to the English listing of groups). A write-in space was also included in the question.

Even though the 1961 Census was a canvasser census, this listing of groups caused considerable controversy. The initial inclusion of "Canadian" in the list of groups on the questionnaire became such a contentious issue that the census instructions provided to the enumerators had to be reprinted six months before the 1961 Census. The reprinted version told enumerators not to include "Canadian" in the list of groups read aloud to respondents. Respondents were discouraged from reporting "Canadian" or "American." Even so, these groups were accepted as valid origins in both the 1951 and 1961 Censuses.<sup>6</sup>

In 1961, "Jewish" was given a mark-in entry, as was "Negro". Native Indians were to indicate if they were band or non-band members.

The concept of linguistic heritage continued to influence the definition of ethnic origin in 1961. Instructions directed enumerators to look to the language of the paternal ancestor as an indication of ethnic origin.

In the postwar period, immigration to Canada of southern and eastern European groups was significant and there was substantial interest in the socio-economic situation and spatial locations of ethnic and immigrant populations. The 1951 and 1961 Census origin data were published in considerable detail, often showing cross-tabulations of ethnic groups by place of birth, religion, citizenship, occupation and other demographic characteristics. Census monographs and studies on ethnicity and immigration were also written.<sup>7</sup>

## **Self-enumeration Censuses, 1971-1991**

### **1971 Ethnic Origin Question**

Beginning with 1971, approximately 98 percent of Canadians were enumerated using a drop-off, mail-back questionnaire. Residents of Indian reserves and people living in remote and northern areas continued to be enumerated by canvassers. In 1971, one in three Canadian households received the sample questionnaire which contained the ethnic origin question: "To which ethnic or cultural group did you or your ancestor (on the male side) belong on first coming to this continent?"

In 1971, language continued to be used as a measure of ethnicity. The *1971 Census Guide* directed respondents to refer to the language spoken by the paternal ancestor when he arrived in North America. The foreign-born were asked to consider as a guide to their ethnic origin the language they spoke before they came to Canada. Groups that could not be identified by their language of origin, such as, "Negroes, Jews, Irish and Scottish," were instructed not to use language as a guide, but rather to indicate the ethnic group to which their father belonged. In the case of respondents of mixed ethnic backgrounds, the father's origin was to be recorded.

Respondents were to report only one ethnic group.<sup>8</sup> Thirteen groups were listed alphabetically in the 1971 ethnic origin question. As in 1951 and 1961, the French language version of the question replicated the order on the English language form. "Jewish" was included in this list of mark-in entries. Respondents of native Indian origin were to indicate whether they were members of an Indian band. No other non-European groups were listed, but a space was provided on which to indicate a group not included in the mark-in entries.

### **1981 Census Question: Elimination of Paternal Ethnic Inheritance and Acceptance of Multiple Responses**

In 1981, ethnic origin was no longer defined as emanating from the paternal ancestor. The 1981 Census question asked, "To which ethnic or cultural group did you or your ancestors belong on first coming to this continent?" Respondents were also permitted to mark or specify as many ethnic groups as were applicable. However, respondents were not specifically informed that multiple responses were permitted. Even so, 11 percent reported more than one ethnic group.

The 1981 Census question provided mark-in boxes for fifteen groups. The groups were listed on the basis of incidence reporting in the previous census. As a result, the non-European group, "Chinese," was shown. Aboriginal respondents were provided with four mark-in entries: "Inuit," "Status or registered Indian," "Non-status Indian" and "Métis." The *1981 Census Guide* asked aboriginal people to ignore the phrase, "on first coming to this continent." The

## *Measuring Ethnicity in Canadian Censuses*

question also contained a write-in space on which to enter groups not shown in the mark-in entries.

The association between language and ethnicity was also changed in 1981. The *1981 Census Guide* cautioned respondents not to confuse language with ethnic or cultural roots. Respondents were asked to report specific groups, for example, "Austrian," not "German."

Self-enumeration was used in all areas of the country, except Indian reserves and remote or northern regions. In 1981, the ethnic origin question was on the sample questionnaire which was sent to one in five households.<sup>9</sup>

### **1986 Census Question: Elimination of Temporal Reference Point, Mark-in Entry of "Black," and Three Write-in Spaces**

The ethnic origin question was changed again for the 1986 Census. The temporal reference point, "on first coming this continent," was eliminated at the request of aboriginal groups who do not view themselves as originating from immigrant stock. The 1986 question asked: "To which ethnic or cultural group(s) do you or did your ancestors belong?" The question also noted that respondents could "Mark or specify as many [groups] as applicable." Fifteen mark-in entries were shown, and three write-in spaces were provided for respondents to indicate groups not on the mark-in list. Examples of other ethnic groups were shown just above these write-in spaces (Appendix A). In 1986, 28 percent reported more than one ethnic group. The 15 mark-in entries were arranged in order of incidence of reporting in the 1981 Census. Two non-European groups were shown: "Chinese" and "Black." "Black" was added to the list in order to improve reporting by Canada's African-origin populations. As well, a list of non-European groups was inserted in the list of example ethnic groups shown next to the three write-in spaces. These groups included "Indian (India)," "Filipino," "Japanese" and "Vietnamese."

The nomenclature used to describe the aboriginal population was also changed. "North American Indian" replaced the terms "Status Indian" and "non-Status Indian." This removed an element of confusion, as in 1981 the Indian Act categories had been considered to have been within the realm of ethnicity. The 1986 Census also included an additional question for aboriginal respondents which permitted them to indicate the group that applied: "Inuit, Status or registered Indian, Non-status Indian and Métis."<sup>10</sup>

Once again, the concepts of ethnic origin and language were deliberately separated, as respondents were asked to consider their ethnic and cultural roots, not their heritage language. For example, the *1986 Census Guide* asked respondents to report, "Austrian rather than German and Haitian instead of French."



As had been the case since 1971, the 1986 Census was for the most part self-enumerated. The ethnic origin question was asked on the sample questionnaire which one in five Canadian households received. Residents of Indian reserves and people in remote and northern areas were enumerated by canvassers. In these areas, all respondents completed the long questionnaire.

### **1991 Census Ethnic Origin**

Changes to the 1986 ethnicity question, particularly removal of the phrase, "on first coming to this continent," may have caused some confusion among respondents about the purpose and intent of the question. Some respondents may have interpreted the question as asking about ethnic identity rather than ethnic ancestry. In an attempt to overcome this problem, the 1991 Census content determination program included extensive testing of ethnic ancestry and ethnic identity questions (Pryor et al. 1992). Race questions were also included in the 1991 Census testing program.

The 1991 Census ethnic question is similar to the 1986 question, but it emphasises ethnic ancestry (Petrie 1989). To inform respondents, a note was added to the question to explain its purpose and to stress that the question asked about ancestral origins rather than ethnic identity or citizenship.

The mark-in entries on the 1986 ethnic question were retained for 1991, but they were reordered on the basis of incidence reporting in 1986. The group "Inuit" was qualified with the word "Eskimo" to overcome response problems that had been noted in 1986 (Hagey 1987). Because of a low response in the third write-in space in 1986, only two spaces were provided in 1991. The list of example ethnic groups was expanded to include not only the largest unlisted ethnic groups ("Portuguese" and "Greek"), but also to mention a representative number of groups from all world regions.

As in 1986, the *1991 Census Guide* pointed out the difference between language and ethnic origin and asked respondents to report, for example, "Haitian" and not "French." As well, respondents of South Asian origin were asked to report, for example, "Indian from India, Punjabi or Pakistani" instead of "Indian," as this could be confused with respondents of aboriginal background.

The *1991 Census Guide* did not provide a specific instruction for respondents of African origin. In hindsight, it would have been helpful to have informed these respondents that they were to mark the box "Black" and, in addition, to report in the spaces provided their ethnic background as being, for instance, "Somalian," "Afro-American" or "Afro-Caribbean." During 1991 Census enumeration, some members of Canada's Black community viewed this omission as denying them an ethnic heritage (*Montréal Gazette*, May 21, 1991).

## *Measuring Ethnicity in Canadian Censuses*

In 1991, the ethnic origin question was on the sample questionnaire, which was delivered to one in five Canadian households. Self-enumeration was used to collect information from about 99 percent of Canadian households, while canvassers enumerated populations living on Indian reserves or in remote and northern areas. For the first time, however, a special canvasser questionnaire was developed. This form contained the sample questionnaire content, but questions were written so as to facilitate canvasser-type data collection.

Also in 1991, a separate question collected information on Indian Act registration and Indian Band/First Nation membership.

### **Summary**

Canada has a long history of collecting ethnic origin data. As Kralt (1990 27) notes, Canada has remarkably good data series which reflects changes in the ethnic, cultural and racial composition of the population from 1901 to 1971. During the periods of settlement of western Canada and of post-second world war immigration, collection of such information permitted researchers and policy makers to evaluate changes occurring in the population relative to the distribution of the two charter groups, French and British. There was, as well, interest in the adaptation and integration of European immigrants, as evidenced by the publication of monographs on topics such as ethnic intermarriage and tabulations showing citizenship status of the foreign-born and regional distributions of ethnic populations.<sup>11</sup>

Since 1971, Canada's ethnic origin data have not been comparable from one census to another. The change from a paternal ancestor as the point of reference and the acceptance of multiple responses have not permitted comparisons over time. This inability to trace ethnic change has frustrated members of the academic community and policy analysts.

The next section of this paper looks at the legislative and policy imperatives that have influenced ethnic origin data collection since 1971. Attention will be given to the impact of Canada's multiculturalism policy and employment equity legislation on census question formation and group classification.

### **Legislation and Policy Considerations**

#### **Introduction: Impact of Multiculturalism Policy and Employment Equity Legislation on the Collection of Ethnicity Data in Canada**

Canada's 20-year-old multiculturalism<sup>12</sup> policy (1971) and the more recent employment equity legislation (1986) have had considerable impact on the collection and coding of ethnic origin data. Technological advances have also permitted Statistics Canada to collect and process more complex ethnic information. This enhanced technical capacity coincided with an increased

demand from users for data on multiple ethnic origin responses, greater ethnic detail and intricate custom tabulations. This section will look at the contribution of both multiculturalism and employment equity to the collection of ethnic origin data.

## **Multiculturalism**

The impetus for Canada's multiculturalism policy was the fourth volume of Canada's Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. The Commission report recognized that the contribution to Canadian society of the non-British and non-French groups had been largely ignored. Further, at the time, there was a recognition of the need to assist groups to maintain heritage languages and cultural traditions within Canada's bilingual framework (Kallen 1982).

More recently, Canada's multiculturalism policy has been broadened to encompass issues of racism and ethnic intolerance. This direction has become a policy priority under the Canadian Multiculturalism Act (1988).

The impact of the multiculturalism policy and changes to immigration regulations in 1966 and later in 1978 which permitted the entry to Canada of previously inadmissible groups (Hawkins 1988) had important impacts on the collection and classification of ethnic group data.

In 1981, the convention that ethnic ancestry was a trait inherited from the paternal ancestor was abandoned. Such a biased view of ethnic heritage was no longer socially or politically acceptable, nor could it be defended on the basis of sociological knowledge. Certainly the emerging emphasis on gender studies in the social sciences also contributed to this change in definition.

Multiple ethnic responses were accepted in 1981. It was generally recognized that Canadian social reality included mixed ethnic marriages in addition to the increased ethnic diversity due to immigration.

It was also evident that the 1971 list of ethnic groups did not fully reflect Canada's ethnic diversity, nor could it meet the demands for data coming from governments and ethnic organizations. The classification and coding of ethnic groups were substantially revamped and updated for the 1981 Census. Revisions to this list have been made in the subsequent 1986 and 1991 Censuses (Appendix B).

Increasing demands for data also coincided with advances in technology, including the development by Statistics Canada of an automated coding system for the 1991 Census (see below) which had significant benefits for the collection of ethnic group data. As well, Statistics Canada made a major effort to develop ethnic data products and services that would better address the needs of data users.



## *Measuring Ethnicity in Canadian Censuses*

Canada's multiculturalism policy (1971) and subsequent legislation (1988), as well as significant changes to the nation's immigration law contributed to increased ethnic diversity and a greater awareness among Canadians of their ethnic background(s). When the time came for them to complete a census questionnaire, they wanted the opportunity to report this diversity, and they also wanted Statistics Canada's publications to reflect the country's cultural mosaic.

### **Employment Equity Legislation**

Employment equity legislation (1986) has also had an impact on the census ethnic question and ethnic group classification. In response to the data requirements of this legislation, the mark-in category "Black" was added to the list of ethnic groups shown on the 1986 and 1991 ethnic questions. This addition improved data quality for those using employment equity statistics (Boxhill 1990, Wright 1988).

Employment equity's requirement for information on non-European groups also contributed to a review of the census ethnic group classification system. Expanded data demand, as well as increasing immigration from non-European countries, prompted revision of existing coding strategies for 1986 and 1991.

Data needs established by employment equity legislation and user interest expressed during the 1991 Census content consultations resulted in the testing of a race question; such a question, however, was not asked in 1991. Canada has been reluctant to ask a direct question on race or skin colour. Currently, the data requirements of the employment equity legislation are fulfilled through the derivation of a user-defined variable developed by the Interdepartmental Working Group on Employment Equity Data.<sup>13</sup>

Specifically, data on Canada's visible minority populations are derived from detailed cross-tabulations of ethnic origin with other census variables including birthplace, mother tongue and in 1981 (and 1991) religion. This approach overcomes respondents' diverse and individualistic reporting of ethnic origin (Boxhill 1990). For example, Boxhill (1985) observed in 1981 when "Black" was not a mark-in entry on the questionnaire that about half of the respondents born in Haiti reported "French," not "Haitian," as their ethnic origin. In such an instance, the derived employment equity variable would include all "French" ethnic origin respondents who reported Haiti as place of birth. This technique, however, does involve making tough choices (Boxhill 1990). While the method *per se* has not been faulted, Statistics Canada's reluctance to ask a race question has been criticised (Stasiulis 1991).

As was mentioned earlier in the paper, use of the term "Black" on the questionnaire generated public debate during 1991 Census data collection. "Black" was viewed as being a racial term and not an ethnic or cultural one by several Black groups.<sup>14</sup> As part of the 1991 Census content determination and testing program, Black community groups and leaders were consulted and

several focus groups were held with Black participants in centres such as Montréal, Toronto and Halifax. Information obtained from consultations, focus groups as well as the National Census Tests indicated that the retention of the mark-in entry of "Black" on the 1991 Census would yield the best data for employment equity purposes.

Since the 1988/89 National Census Tests and census content consultations, the term "African" has entered the public lexicon. For instance, "Afro-American" and "African studies" have replaced "Black American" and "Black studies." It remains to be seen whether this terminology change will gain widespread public acceptance and further testing will be required to determine whether use of this term will produce data suitable for employment equity purposes.

### **Summary**

Canada's ethnic origin question and the classification of ethnic groups have been influenced by the multiculturalism policy, employment equity legislation and increased immigration from non-traditional source countries. As a result, the concept of ethnicity itself has changed. The next section will discuss the concept of ethnicity that has been measured by Canada's recent ethnic questions.

### **Concepts of Ethnicity**

#### **Introduction**

As previously noted, before 1981 Canada's census stipulated that ethnic origin should be traced to the male ancestor who first came to this continent. As well, respondents could report only one ethnic origin.

During the period 1951-1971, there was also an explicit connection between language and ethnicity. The mother tongue question was used in conjunction with the ethnic origin question to determine levels of ethnic and linguistic assimilation (Lachapelle 1991, 10).

Ethnic identity, especially "Canadian" or "American," has never been considered as being within the realm of ethnic origin. Respondents were not encouraged to report these groups as ancestries and before 1951, such responses would not have been accepted as valid.

The question that must be asked concerns what Canada's census ethnic origin question has actually measured. Lieberman and Waters (1988, 34) conclude that the question has measured the ethnic ancestry of the population to the degree that respondents know their ethnic background and are willing to report it. Notwithstanding the 1986 Census question, the focus has been on ethnic ancestry and not ethnic identity.

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Further, there has been a long-standing view that the ethnic origin question would measure ascribed ethnic transfer. However, as early as 1956 this notion was criticized. As Ryder notes in his paper, "Interpretation of Origin Statistics," by 1951 about 55 percent of children born in Canada, excluding those of French origin, had origins different from those of their mothers. He concluded, "Origin is thus more of a variable than an attribute." Therefore, as early as 1951 the census was collecting only a partial picture of the country's ethnic diversity.

### **Fluidity of Ethnicity**

Recent work by Lieberman and Waters (1988) on the reporting by parents of their children's ethnicity in the 1980 United States Census, by Alba (1990) on the shifts between ethnic origin and identity among second- and third-generation Americans, and by Waters (1990) on the ethnic options for White Americans point to considerable flux in the notion of ethnicity. These substantive analyses further reinforce the work of Lieberman (1985) concerning the fluidity of ethnicity among White Americans and of Juteau-Lee (1979) regarding "le mouvement incessant des frontières ethniques."

In any discussion of the measurement of ethnic origin it is important to remember that the vehicle used to record ethnic group affiliation can influence the choices that respondents make regarding their ethnic backgrounds and current ethnic identification. The social and political environment at the time of enumeration can also affect the reporting of ethnicity, for instance, the desire to report "Canadian" which occurred during collection of the 1991 Census. These ethnic choices can have a considerable impact on census counts.

For some respondents, the choice is relatively simple: they share the ethnic origin of their ancestors. For others, the ethnic choice(s) are less obvious. For example, factors such as lack of knowledge about family history, mixed ethnic background, several generations of residence in Canada, language transfer to either English or French, or a loss of a distinctive religious heritage, customs or practices will influence respondents' choice(s). Alternatively, undesirable origins may be conveniently forgotten, while more acceptable ones may be emphasized (Waters 1990; Ryder 1956).

For some people, ethnicity may be of little importance. It would, in fact, be unrealistic to assume that ethnicity is something every respondent consciously possesses. At the same time, others see their roots in the country in which they have lived for many generations. For them, there is no other suitable response than "Canadian", "Québécois," or "Acadian."

Lieberman and Waters (1988) conclude that among White Americans of European ethnic background there is a lessening of ethnic differences due to intermarriage, upward socio-economic mobility and generational distance from the immigration event. They observe that for many White Americans three processes can occur. First, there may be a change in identification



which results in the reporting of "American." Second, some respondents make choices about the origins they will report or drop. And a third group keep track of complicated multiple ancestries, which they report on the census.

It could be argued that in Canada, despite the intervening variable of the multiculturalism policy, these three processes are occurring. Respondents' notions of ethnicity are subject to choice. Moreover, ethnicity is socially constructed. In Canada, factors such as multiculturalism, high levels of immigration, bilingualism, support for heritage language retention and the rise of ethnic nationalism in the country of origin can influence and contribute to the construction of group and individual ethnic identification.

### **Summary**

Canada's attempts to measure ethnic ancestry can be affected by factors such as lack of knowledge of family ethnic background, inter-generational ethnic transfer, and length of time since the immigration event. Respondents may also equate ethnic ancestry with the concepts of nationality, citizenship and ethnic identity.

The paper has argued that respondents make ethnic choices. The following section is a closer examination of the intersection of ethnic choice and ethnic response and of the effect of changes in these areas on census counts and ethnic distributions.

### **Impact of Nomenclature and Ethnic Consciousness on Census Counts**

#### **Instability of Concepts**

It is important for statistical agencies to remember that ethnic origin is both a status and a process. Moreover, there is considerable comfort to be gained from the observation of Lieberman and Waters (1988, 256) in *From Many Strands*:

Indeed, some of the difficulties that research and census takers experience in using data on racial and ethnic groups are due not to problems of instrumentation or execution .... Rather some of the difficulties and inconsistencies reflect the processes of ethnic and racial change themselves; the "errors" are telling us something about the flux in the concepts and identifications themselves.

Certainly Canada's experience of ethnic measurement reveals the complex nature of the subject. Sociologists recognize that upon immigration, group ethnic consciousness is modified. In Canada, as in the United States, groups from distinct cultural regions are often renamed once communities become established. For example, people originally from Tuscany or Sicily have come to be known as Italians.

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Farley (1990, 81) has observed: "Presumably, many European migrants originally identified with specific geographic origins but learned in the United States that they were Irish, German, Italian or Yugoslavian." As Bonacich (1972) and Yancey et al. (1976) have noted it is often only after immigration that a common sense of ethnicity emerges. This tendency, however, can be altered when political events in the home country function to overtake a notion of common ethnicity. For example, ethnic struggles in Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia can influence the rise of Serbian, Croatian, Czech and Slovak ethnic identity in North America.

Canada's census questions, by using a mark-in entry for some ethnic groups, have made the assumption that respondents view themselves as being, for example, "Italian" or "French."<sup>15</sup> As a result, respondents check these groups instead of responding "Sardinian," "Sicilian," "Québécois" or "Acadian."

Thus, racial and ethnic groups should be viewed not as static entities, but as products of labelling. Moreover, the identification processes can change and evolve over time. In Canada, change in identification has occurred not only among European groups, but also among those of Asian, Arab and African origin.

To further complicate the situation, the nomenclature of some groups has varied considerably from one census to the next. For example, persons of East Indian background, labelled in early censuses as "Hindoo,"<sup>16</sup> have been classified in recent census publications as "Indo-Pakistani," "East Indian," or "South Asian." The term used by the United States Bureau of the Census, "Asian Indian," has not been widely accepted in Canada.

### **Changing Response Patterns**

Just as classification systems have changed over time, so too have the reporting patterns of respondents. Some respondents of South Asian origin for instance will report "Bengali" or "Punjabi" origins; others will give "Fijian," "West Indian" or "Kenyan," thereby indicating that their background was shaped by the experience of residence in former British colonies. Thus, aspects of staged migration also factor into the determination of ethnic group formation. A similar reporting pattern also occurs among past residents of former French colonies. However, in this instance, respondents will frequently report "French" instead of "Haitian" or "Algerian."<sup>17</sup>

Another aspect of the naming or identification of ethnic groups in Canada is the development of distinct labels in French and English. For example, the North African Arab community in Quebec has coalesced into the group "Maghrébin"; whereas, in English Canada, the use of the term "North African Arab" is more common.

In fact, considerable evidence suggests that there may be continuous flux in the categories themselves and in who define themselves (or are defined by others) as belonging in these

categories. This can lead to numeric shifts in racial and ethnic populations. A classic example of such a change was observed by Ryder (1956) in his study of 1941 Canadian census data.<sup>18</sup>

While with hindsight it may be relatively easy to see patterns of uneven response in earlier censuses, it is difficult to predict with accuracy how respondents will report their ethnic background in the future and whether reporting patterns will be stable over time. In Canada, this problem is further compounded by factors such as multiculturalism, which to a certain extent appears to "politicize" group nomenclature. Moreover, the views of ethnic group advocates may not always correspond to respondents' views, many of whom hold what Gans (1979) has termed symbolic ethnicity.

### **Symbolic Ethnicity**

The concept of symbolic ethnicity has been developed further by Waters (1990) who shows that for many White Americans ethnicity is a choice that they freely make. Symbolic ethnicity, then, is a result of decisions taken by the individual. Thus, one can choose to emphasize or to ignore certain aspects of his/her cultural background. A likely outcome of this apparent fluidity in ethnic identification is a shift over time in reported nomenclature and alterations in census counts and the distribution of ethnic populations.

For example, active members of Czech and Slovak groups do not agree with the Statistics Canada practice of collecting and publishing the group "Czechoslovakian." In 1986, nearly as many respondents reported "Czechoslovakian" (44,435) as "Czech" (39,635), although considerably fewer reported "Slovak" (27,700). Similarly, "Yugoslavian" (84,575) was a more common response than were "Croatian" (44,165), "Serbian" (12,965), or "Slovenian" (8,120). Given the political change that occurred just before the June 4, 1991 Census, it will be interesting to compare 1991 Census counts of the Eastern European groups with those obtained in 1986.

For Canada, influenced as it is by multiculturalism policy, Barth's (1969) conceptualization of ethnic dynamics is particularly salient, especially as it pertains to classification and group formation. Barth's emphasis on ethnicity as a subjective process in which ethnic labels are used for self-definition and during interaction with others is of considerable relevance.

Thus far the paper has discussed the choices that respondents make. However, there is also a view that Statistics Canada itself influences respondents' ethnic choices by listing some but not all groups on the questionnaire, as well as in the way that ethnic responses have been coded and categorized. Some ethnic associations hold the view that listing of groups on the questionnaire results in higher response rates for the groups shown. As larger counts translate into a heightened public profile, there is an incentive to do all that is possible to increase counts, including securing a place on the census question list.



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But whether the listing of groups does, in fact, result in higher counts has yet to be proven conclusively. Results from the 1991 National Census Tests indicate that some groups seem to be more likely than others to provoke a positive response. The groups "Canadian" and "Black" are cases in point. When these two groups are included in the list, their counts go up.

The order in which the groups appear on the list is also thought by some to have an impact on respondent choice. Representatives of ethnic groups have stated that they suspect that respondents will tend to mark groups higher up on the list. Supporting this position is the work by Demers (1979) and Kralt (1977) who attributed the observed increase in "English" counts in the 1971 Census to the placement of this group at the top of the list of 15 groups.<sup>19</sup>

On the other hand, results from Statistics Canada's 1991 Census National Census Test indicated that respondents who wish to report an origin will do so even when that group is located far down on the list. For example, the entry "Canadian" accounted for more than 50 percent of responses to an identity question and over 35 percent of responses to an ancestry question even though it was situated at the bottom of 15 mark-ins and three write-in entries (Pryor et al. 1992).

Another point of contention is the selection of groups shown. Since 1981, Statistics Canada has based the selection on incidence reporting in the previous census, and as a result, newly arrived groups do not obtain a mark-in entry. In 1986, for example, the 15 mark-in entries accounted for over 85 percent of the total ethnic response. This fact is difficult to communicate to members of recent immigrant groups who view their omission from the list as a continuation of racist immigration policies which had in the past excluded them from meaningful participation in Canadian society. The issue for these recent arrivals is that, given their short length of residence in Canada, they have had less time to affect the country's generational composition and so have smaller numeric impact compared with the groups with longer residency.<sup>20</sup>

In essence, all these points of disagreement with Statistics Canada have to do with the notion of ethnic choices, especially when it is perceived that the form of the question appears to structure or influence respondents' answers. As was evident in the 1991 Census consultations and at focus-group sessions undertaken as part of the 1991 testing program, many ethnic groups and respondents are concerned that they receive fair treatment.

Thus Statistics Canada must not only treat all groups equally, it must be seen to be treating all groups in the same manner. The design of questions which do not contain a perceived ethnic or linguistic bias is a major challenge for statistical agencies.

### **Summary**

Each country has unique ethnic measurement problems and develops its own ethnic taxonomy. This section of the paper has reviewed the nature of ethnic flux and linked it to the Canadian

experience in measuring ethnicity. It was argued that ethnic options exercised by respondents can have wide-reaching impacts that may affect ethnic group nomenclature and group distributions. The section also discussed the influence that question design can have on ethnic choices. In Canada, the listing of mark-in entries, the selection of the groups to be shown, and the objective itself (whether it concerns ancestry or identity) can have a bearing on responses, and thus, on the distribution of ethnic groups.

The next section focuses on aspects of data preparation, in particular, collection, capture and processing of the ethnic origin variable.

### **Data Collection, Capture and processing**

#### **Collection: Specific Ethnic Origin Concerns**

Several data collection issues have already been discussed. Table 3 shows the changes that have occurred during the period 1951 to 1991.

**Table 3: Comparison of Ethnic Origin Questions**

Ethnic origin question	1951	1961	1971	1981	1986	1991
Canvasser	X	X				
Self-enumeration			X	X	X	X
Sample size	100%	100%	33.3%	20%	20%	20%
Number of mark-in entries	18	30	13	15	15	15
Number of write-in entries	1	1	1	1	3	2
Maximum number of responses permitted	1	1	1	16	18	17
Paternal ancestry	X	X	X			
"on first coming to this continent"	X	X	X	X		
Linguistic association with ethnic origin	X	X	X			

To improve the enumeration of specific populations, Statistics Canada has developed census questionnaires and adapted enumeration methodologies. In 1991, for instance, a special canvasser questionnaire was developed for enumeration of Indian reserves and settlements and

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other northern populations. It is expected that this will reduce the level of non-response on reserves.<sup>21</sup>

Also, in 1991 a special questionnaire was developed for the soup-kitchen enumeration. Birthplace and mother tongue information was collected, but not data on ethnic origin.

Another change in 1991 was collection of information on the non-permanent resident population. Thus, for 1991 people holding student authorizations, employment authorizations or Minister's permits, and refugee claimants were required to complete a census questionnaire. Not since 1941 has this group of "foreign" residents been counted. This change in the census universe conforms more closely to the United Nations' recommendation that countries collect data on short-term migrants (Zlotnik 1987).

Statistics Canada attempts to improve contact, and ultimately coverage, of ethnic and cultural populations by translating the census questions into languages other than English or French. In 1986 and 1991, the questionnaire was produced in thirty-one languages. As well, brochures and assistance were offered in languages other than English or French. Information about the census was also featured in the ethnic media, including newspapers, radio and television.

### **Data Capture: Manual Coding Prior to 1991, Automated Coding for 1991**

This section will review important data processing issues concerning the ethnic origin variable. In the period since 1971 Statistics Canada has used several techniques to code write-in entries. In 1971 for example, Canada's ethnic origin question was translated into a machine-readable format using the FOSDIC character recognition technology. Beginning in 1981, census responses have been key-entered. In 1981 and 1986 the keying operation included the entry of the numeric codes assigned by manual coders during Head Office processing of the write-in entries.

The manual assignment of codes has always been an error-prone exercise which can reduce data quality.<sup>22</sup> For 1991 an automated coding system was developed. This system is a combination of batch (system coding) and on-line computer-assisted (manual coding) processing. During the key-entry phase of 1991 Census data capture, up to 45 characters per write-in space are captured. The keyed entries are then matched against a reference file containing the master list of ethnic groups and cultural regions and their corresponding numeric codes.<sup>23</sup> Developed and tested over several years, the 1991 ethnic origin reference file contains all entries that can be assigned to a specific code, including common misspellings and abbreviations.

In cases where a direct match cannot be made, for example where two or more origins have been written in one space or for entries of "Indian," the coding is completed manually by expert coders. This manual process is computer-assisted. The coder can view a selection of "possible"



matches as well as responses to other questions. Thus, it is possible in the case of a write-in of "Indian" to look at the respondent's birthplace, religion and mother tongue, as well as the responses provided by other members of the household, in order to correctly code the write-in as "East Indian" or "North American Indian."

Statistics Canada's policy is to code all entries, except where the response is not codable because no specific ethnic origin or cultural region can be assigned. In cases where three or more entries are reported, only two groups are coded. In the event that "Canadian" is reported, the entry will be coded as either a single or multiple response, unlike the United States where "American" is coded only when it is reported as a single response.

The Statistics Canada automated coding system has proved to be very effective. During the initial stages of 1991 Census production, match rates for ethnic origin were about 92 percent. In terms of data quality, the combined error rate for system and manual coding was .01 percent.

Manual resolution of entries by expert Statistics Canada coders in 1991 has revealed several conceptual conundrums. When faced with odd or unusual responses, it is often difficult to understand what was meant or implied by respondent. For instance, respondents frequently provide additional information and it is often unclear to coders whether the respondent is merely elaborating upon a previous response or reporting a different group.

For example, how should the response combination of "Egyptian Arab" be coded? Does this combination of groups constitute two separate groups of "Egyptian" and "Arab?" Or, is this a single response of "Egyptian" or "Arab?" Please note that both "Egyptian" and "Arab" are found on the ethnic data base as unique groups. Such a combination of groups becomes problematic only when they are entered on the same line. When the groups are reported on separate lines on the question, the system codes them automatically. In this latter instance, changes could be made during the processing of the data.

Each statistical agency designs their coding structure differently. How this structure is conceived and implemented can impact on, for example, levels of multiple response. Moreover, subtle changes from one census to the next may affect ethnic group counts and the distribution of single and multiple responses.

### **Data Processing: Ethnic Origin**

This section of the paper will look at the ethnic origin data processing strategies developed for the 1981, 1986, and 1991 Censuses. Only an overview of this topic will be presented. Readers requiring more in-depth information are requested to consult the *1981 Users' Guide to the 1981 Ethnic Origin Data* (Boxhill 1986) and the *Users' Guide to the 1986 Ethnic Origin Data* (White 1990).

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In Canada, all census information is validated through a process called "edit and imputation." During this process, responses are deemed to be valid or in conflict on the basis of predetermined edit rules. Valid data are accepted without modification; conflicts are resolved following a rule of minimum change to respondent-provided data. In cases where the ethnic origin question is left blank, responses are imputed according to predetermined imputation rules. Traditionally, non-response to ethnic origin question is low<sup>24</sup> and imputation does not alter data distributions.

Mother tongue has been used to structure imputation in the case of non-response. For example, a non-response record with a "Greek" mother tongue would find a donor record also bearing a "Greek" mother tongue. Non-mandatory constraints such as age, sex and residence are used to locate a donor record which best matches that containing non-response ethnic origin.

The software<sup>25</sup> used in the data processing is able to impute more than one ethnic origin. In this way, the non-response population mirrors the levels of single and multiple response in the rest of the population.

### **Ethnic Origin Data Products and Services**

The main mandate of Statistics Canada, of course, is to make data accessible to users. The census ethnic origin data pose a special challenge in this regard. This section will look at the two major problems associated with ethnicity – publication of single/multiple response data and presentation of ethnic groups and categories.

### **Single/Multiple Responses**

The particular challenge presented by the ethnic origin variable is showing data on over 100 different ethnic groups for which single and multiple response counts are collected.

A single response is one marked entry or one write-in response.

Reporting more than one group, by selecting more than one mark-in entry, providing more than one write-in response, or the combination of the two is considered to be a multiple ethnic origin response. In 1986, for example, a respondent could report a maximum of 18 groups. Statistics Canada does not attempt to prioritize multiple responses by order of preference. Indeed, it is impossible to do so, as there is no way of knowing which group the respondent marked or wrote first.<sup>26</sup>

Statistics Canada 1986 data tabulations display ethnic data single response counts (Table 1, Appendix C), single and multiple responses for each ethnic group (Table 2, Appendix C), and a selected number of multiple response combinations (Table 7, Catalogue 99-109). Ethnic origin

information is available for all geographic levels although ethnic groups may be combined into ethnic categories.<sup>27</sup>

Any combination or categorization of ethnic groups requires that Statistics Canada make choices about taxonomy and data presentation. This has given rise to several controversial issues.

One such controversy concerns the publication of single and multiple response counts. There are several ways of doing this. Table 1 (Appendix C) shows selected single response groups and the multiple responses are combined together into seven categories. This approach underestimates the total size of ethnic populations. The advantage is that no respondent is counted more than once, and as a result, the values in the table sum to the total population of the particular geographical area under consideration.

Table 2 (Appendix C) provides single and multiple response counts for ethnic groups. This method counts total responses, not the total number of respondents. Thus, the respondent who provided, for example, a multiple response of "French and German" would appear in the multiple response category of "French" and "German."

The Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship uses yet another approach when publishing Statistics Canada ethnic origin data. Their reports often show only the total count per group. This has a certain appeal to ethnic communities as it counts all those of particular ethnic backgrounds, regardless of response pattern. The disadvantage is that it masks some very real demographic differences between the single response populations and those who report a mixed ethnic background (White 1989).

As well, specific ethnic group combinations can be shown (Table 7, Catalogue 99-109), but is impractical to publish all combinations. Users can obtain this information on special request.

Less specific in approach is the publication of five summary categories:<sup>28</sup> "Total British,"<sup>29</sup> "Total French,"<sup>30</sup> "British and French," "British and/or French and Other," and "Other." This method is attractive to policy makers and the media as it removes the thorny problem of double counting and also permits a degree of comparison over time. Yet, some users see view this type of data display as giving too much emphasis to the charter groups of "British" and "French" and placing the remaining origins, including aboriginals, in a category labelled "Other."

In summary, there are several ways of displaying ethnicity data and depending on the uses to which the data are put, each approach described above has merit. It should be noted that users frequently find these differing modes of data display to be confusing. Education of the user community is obviously required to facilitate appropriate data dissemination. Maintaining a flexible data retrieval system also ensures that users can obtain the data in the forms which best suit their needs.



### **Ethnic Groups and Ethnic Categories**

Another major issue concerns the publication of ethnic groups and categories. Statistics Canada has used ethnic categories as a way to combine several ethnic groups. For example, the "Scandinavian" category includes the "Danish," "Swedish," "Norwegian," "Icelandic" and "Scandinavian n.i.e." groups. Publication of summary categories is appropriate when short legends are necessary or when the confidentiality of the respondent may be violated.

The categorization taxonomy used by Statistics Canada may not be suitable for all users nor appropriate in every analytical application. There are also technical concerns about the counting of respondents and responses, in particular, those with intra-category multiple responses. This situation calls for the specification of separate retrieval variables which allow for greater flexibility in the creation of ethnic categories. In 1986, two intra-category multiple response values were developed, "British only"<sup>31</sup> and "French only."<sup>32</sup> It is expected that the 1991 Census data retrieval base will include more intra-group ethnic categories.

### **Statistics Canada Products and Services**

Statistics Canada is required to recover the costs of data products and services. A system of regional offices provides data and advisory services to users. As well, Statistics Canada census publications are made available free of charge to over 500 public and university libraries through the Depository Library Program. Data dissemination for targeted groups such as visible minorities<sup>33</sup> and aboriginal<sup>34</sup> is also undertaken.

### **Conclusion**

This paper has discussed Canada's extensive experience in the collection of ethnic data and the measurement of ethnicity. Several challenges face the Agency with regard to the measurement, collection, and dissemination of ethnicity data.

Ethnic group formation is dynamic. There is a continuous process of combining and recombining so that groups appear and disappear. Each census and survey produces but a snapshot of this changing ethnic landscape.

In each country, ethnicity is socially constructed differently. Recently, in Canada, issues of ethnic identity and ancestral origin have taken on new meaning. Certainly, responses conditioned by awareness of these two question areas result in differing population counts and distributions (Pryor et al. 1992). Moreover, Statistics Canada is mandated to provide data for multiculturalism and employment equity programs. Without a direct measure of race or colour, an ethnic ancestry-based question has proved to be essential. Yet, depending on the numerical

strength of the evolving group "Canadian," the continued success of this approach may be brought into question.

For future censuses, there will be some difficult choices to make regarding the continued collection of ethnic ancestry data. To deal fairly with all users, many of whom have differing needs for and opinions about the collection of ancestry, identity and race type data, it is imperative that the unbiased position of Statistics Canada remains intact.

In the area of dissemination of census ethnic data, there is a continuing challenge concerning the meeting of diverse user needs. This involves not only publication of tabulations but also interpreting data trends and comparing regional differences. Ensuring data accessibility to community and ethnic groups, given Statistics Canada's cost-recovery mandate, requires creative initiatives on the part of various users, including the academic and ethnic communities and policy research sectors. In 1986 for instance, consortium buying and joint participation resulted in cost-savings for purchasers of micro-data tapes.

Finally, public debate on such topics as multiculturalism and Canadian nationalism (Spicer 1991) elevated the profile of the 1991 Census collection of cultural data among certain sectors of the population. While these are specific concerns for Canada, the critical point is that the census is not necessarily a neutral data collection vehicle. Relevant and clearly worded questions facilitate accurate response and promote participation. On the other hand, events occurring during data collection can affect respondents and influence both their participation and responses. In this area, Statistics Canada's impartiality and commitment to respondent confidentiality must continue to be safeguarded, as these are the Agency's most important assets in the struggle to gain respondent confidence and participation.

## Notes

1. The 1851 and 1861 Censuses used birthplace and ethnic origin to identify the origins of the population. Published tables showed information on the Canadian-born French and non-French groups.
2. The 1891 Census contained a question which identified French Canadians. Information on other ethnic groups was not collected.
3. For the 1911 to 1931 Censuses, the assumption made was that respondents of mixed aboriginal/European origin obtained their aboriginal background from their maternal parent.
4. See Statistics Canada, *Annotated Bibliography: 1767-1991*. 1992.

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5. Jewish has been considered as both an ethnic group and a religion by Canada's census since 1901.
6. Prior to 1951, "American" and "Canadian" were not accepted as valid responses. In 1951, 1961 and 1971 these groups were included in the "Other" origins category. The 1981, 1986 and 1991 Census publications show "Canadian" and "American" as separate ethnic groups.
7. See: *Origins of the Canadian Population*. Catalogue 7.1-6. Ottawa: Dominion Bureau of the Census, 1961 Census. W.E. Kalbach, *Impact of Immigration on Canada's Population*. 1961 Census Monograph Series, Ottawa: Dominion Bureau of the Census, 1970.
8. FOSDIC optical-reading technology was used to capture the responses. In the event that two or more groups were marked or entered, the darkest mark read by FOSDIC would be retained.
9. To ensure reliable data for small geographic areas with sparsely distributed populations, households enumerated by canvassers completed the sample questionnaire.
10. There was a high level of inaccurate response to the aboriginal question (#7). It appears that some non-aboriginal respondents answered the question. In particular, the term "Inuit" was not well understood. See Hagey 1987.
11. See Statistics Canada (1992), *Annotated Bibliography, Ethnic Origin Data: 1767-1991*.
12. See G. Gauld, "Multiculturalism: The Real Thing" in Hryniuk, S., *Twenty Years of Multiculturalism: Successes and Failures*. Winnipeg: St. John's College Press, 1992, 9-16.
13. Members of the Interdepartmental Working Group on Employment Equity Data include: Canadian Human Rights Commission, Employment and Immigration Canada, Public Service Commission, Statistics Canada, and Treasury Board Secretariat.
14. *Montréal Gazette*, May 21, 1991, *Halifax Mail-Star*, May 21, 1991.
15. In 1961 there was an assumption that respondents were "Yugoslavic." This had to be changed in 1971 when ethnic groups demanded that Statistics Canada code "Croatian" and "Serbian" as separate groups (Kralt, personal conversation, July 1991).
16. See Indra, Doreen, "South Asian Stereotypes in the Vancouver Press," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 1979 for a review of terminology used by non-South Asians to describe those of East Indian, Sikh and Pakistani background.



17. As "French" was the first mark-in entry in 1986 and 1991, respondents could be marking in this group rather than writing in "Haitian" or "Algerian." Language could also be an factor.
18. Analysis of 1941 Census data revealed a drop in counts for the German group. Hurd (1931) also noted a similar drop in the 1921 Census data and he concluded that respondents of German origin had reported being Dutch.
19. The 1971 question emphasized a linguistic connection with ethnic origin. It is not surprising that "English" would benefit due to language transfer and notions of anglo-conformity. After 1971, however, both multiculturalism and strengthened language laws served to counteract these forces.
20. Lieberman and Waters (1988) also observed this situation occurring in the United States.
21. In 1981, six Indian reserves refused to participate. As a result, 5,000 reserve residents were not counted. In 1986, 136 reserves and settlements did not participate, and an estimated 45,000 people were not included. In 1991, about 55 reserves did not participate.
22. In 1986 manual coders confused the mother tongue and ethnic origin code-list values. See discussion on coding errors in the *Users Guide to the 1986 Census Ethnic Origin Data* (White, 1990).
23. The computer software which performs this matching is called Automated Coding by Text Recognition (ACTR).
24. Non-response in 1981 was 2.3 percent and 2.5 percent in 1986. Data for 1991 are not yet available.
25. In 1981, 1986 and 1991 SPIDER was used. See the *Census Handbook* for a description of the SPIDER software.
26. The listing of ethnic groups on the data base reflects the numeric order of the assigned codes. No measure of priority can be inferred from this ordering.
27. For example, in 1986 Census publications, the British category included the ethnic groups: "English," "Irish," "Scottish," "Welsh," "Other British" and "British, not indicated elsewhere."
28. For 1991 depending on the counts, it may be necessary to modify this five-group summary to show "Canadian." The summary groups would be a combination of "British," "French," "Other" and "Canadian" responses.

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29. In 1986, "Total British" included the single response groups of "English," "Irish," "Scottish," "Welsh," "Other British" and "British not indicated elsewhere" and the "British only" intra-group multiple response.
30. In 1986, the "Total French" summary group included the single responses of "French," "Québécois," "Acadian," and "French Canadian" and the "French only" intra-group multiple response.
31. "British only" is an intra-group multiple response category involving the "English," "Irish," "Scottish," "Welsh," "Other British" and "British, not indicated elsewhere" multiple responses. For example, the respondent reported the origins of "Irish" and "Welsh."
32. "French only" is an intra-group multiple response combination of the groups "French," "Acadian," "French Canadian," "Québécois," "Franco-Manitoban" and "Franco-Ontarian." For example, the respondent reported "French" and "Acadian."
33. See Statistics Canada, *1991 Interdepartmental Working Group on Employment Equity Data Annual Report*, for a complete list of data products and services.
34. See Statistics Canada, *1991 Census Catalogue* (1st edition), Catalogue 92-302E/F, Section 2.6, for a complete list of 1991 Census aboriginal data products and services.

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**Appendices**

Appendix A: Examples of census ethnic origin questions, 1951-1991

Appendix B: Comparison of Ethnic Origins Collected in 1991, 1986 and 1981

Appendix C: Table 1: Population by Ethnic Origin, Canada, 1986 Census

Table 2: Population by Selected Ethnic Origins, Showing Single and Multiple Origins, Canada, 1986 Census

## Appendix A

### 1951 Census of Canada

#### Question on Origin:

17. Origin			
English <input type="checkbox"/>	French <input type="checkbox"/>	0	0
Irish <input type="checkbox"/>	Netherlands <input type="checkbox"/>	1	1
Scottish <input type="checkbox"/>	Norwegian <input type="checkbox"/>	2	2
Welsh & Manx <input type="checkbox"/>	Polish <input type="checkbox"/>	3	3
Czech & Slovak <input type="checkbox"/>	Russian <input type="checkbox"/>	4	4
Finnish <input type="checkbox"/>	Swedish <input type="checkbox"/>	5	5
German <input type="checkbox"/>	Hungarian <input type="checkbox"/>	6	6
Italian <input type="checkbox"/>	Native Indian <input type="checkbox"/>	7	7
Jewish <input type="checkbox"/>	Unknown <input type="checkbox"/>	8	8
If not listed, write below.			

### 1961 Census of Canada

#### Question on Ethnic or Cultural Group:

To what ethnic or cultural group did you or your ancestor (on the male side) belong on coming to this continent?	Austrian	Belgian	Czech	Danish	English	Estonian	Finnish	Native Indian Band Member Non-Band	If not listed, write here:
	French	German	Greek	Hungarian	Icelandic	Irish	Italian		
	Jewish	Lithuanian	Negro	Netherlands	Norwegian	Polish	Romanian		
	Russian	Scottish	Slovak	Swedish	Ukrainian	Welsh	Yugoslavic		



## *Measuring Ethnicity in Canadian Censuses*

### 1971 Census of Canada

#### Question on Ethnic or Cultural Group:

15. To what ethnic or cultural group did you or your ancestor (on the male side) belong on coming to this continent?

- |                                  |   |                                    |
|----------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> English | <input type="checkbox"/> Native Indian - Band     | <input type="checkbox"/> Polish    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> French  | <input type="checkbox"/> Native Indian - Non-band | <input type="checkbox"/> Scottish  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> German  | <input type="checkbox"/> Netherlands              | <input type="checkbox"/> Ukrainian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Irish   | <input type="checkbox"/> Norwegian                |                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Italian |   |                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jewish  |   |                                    |

\_\_\_\_\_  
Other, write here

### 1981 Census of Canada

#### Question on Ethnic Origin:

26. To which ethnic or cultural group did you or your ancestors belong on first coming to this continent?

*(See Guide for further information)*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> French              | <b>Native Peoples</b>                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> English             | <input type="checkbox"/> Inuit                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Irish               | <input type="checkbox"/> Status or registered Indian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Scottish            | <input type="checkbox"/> Non-status Indian           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> German              | <input type="checkbox"/> Métis                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Italian             |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ukrainian           |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dutch (Netherlands) |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Polish              |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jewish              |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese             |  |

☐ \_\_\_\_\_  
Other (specify)

**1986 Census of Canada**

**Question on Ethnic or Cultural Group:**

**17. To which ethnic or cultural group(s) do you or did your ancestors belong?**  
*(See Guide)*

**Mark or specify as many as applicable**

- ☐ **French**
- ☐ **English**
- ☐ **Irish**
- ☐ **Scottish**
- ☐ **German**
- ☐ **Italian**
- ☐ **Ukrainian**
- ☐ **Dutch (Netherlands)**
- ☐ **Chinese**
- ☐ **Jewish**
- ☐ **Polish**
- ☐ **Black**
- ☐ **Inuit**
- ☐ **North American Indian**
- ☐ **Métis**

**Other ethnic or cultural group(s).** *For example, Portuguese, Greek, Indian (India), Pakistani, Filipino, Japanese, Vietnamese. (specify below)*

☐ \_\_\_\_\_  
*Other (specify)*

☐ \_\_\_\_\_  
*Other (specify)*

☐ \_\_\_\_\_  
*Other (specify)*

## Measuring Ethnicity in Canadian Censuses

### 1991 Census of Canada

#### Question on Ethnic or Cultural Group:

<p><b>Ethnic Origin</b></p> <p>15. To which ethnic or cultural group(s) did this person's ancestors belong?</p> <p>Mark or specify as many as applicable.</p> <p>Note: While most people of Canada view themselves as Canadian, information about their ancestral origins has been collected since the 1901 Census to reflect the changing composition of the Canadian population and is needed to ensure that everyone, regardless of his/her ethnic or cultural background, has equal opportunity to share fully in the economic, social, cultural and political life of Canada. Therefore, this question refers to the origins of this person's ancestors.</p> <p>See Guide.</p> <p><i>Examples of other ethnic or cultural groups are: Portuguese, Greek, Indian from India, Pakistani, Filipino, Vietnamese, Japanese, Lebanese, Haitian, etc.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> French</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> English</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> German</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Scottish</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Italian</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Irish</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Ukrainian</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Chinese</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Dutch (Netherlands)</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Jewish</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Polish</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Black</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> North American</li><li>Indian</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Métis</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Inuit/Eskimo</li></ul> <p><i>Other ethnic or cultural group(s) - Specify</i></p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
---	--



## Appendix B

### Comparison of Ethnic Origins Collected in 1991, 1986 and 1981

1991 Classification	1986 Classification	1981 Classification
<b>Self-coded Answers*</b>		
French	French	French
English	English	English
German	German	German
Scottish	Scottish	Scottish
Italian	Italian	Italian
Irish	Irish	Irish
Ukrainian	Ukrainian	Ukrainian
Chinese	Chinese	Chinese
Dutch (Netherlands)	Dutch (Netherlands)	Dutch (Netherlands)
Jewish	Jewish	Jewish
Polish	Polish	Polish
Black	Black	Office-coded entry
North American Indian	North American Indian	Status Indian, Non-status Indian
Métis	Métis	Métis
Inuit/Eskimo <sup>1</sup>	Inuit	Inuit
<b>Office-coded Answers<sup>2</sup></b>		
Other British, n.i.e.	British, n.i.e., Other British	British, n.o.s., British, n.e.s.
Welsh	Welsh	Welsh
Acadian	Acadian	Québécois, Acadian, Franco-Ontarian, etc.
Franco-Manitoban	Franco-Manitoban <sup>3</sup>	Québécois, Acadian, Franco-Ontarian, etc.
Franco-Ontarian	Franco-Ontarian <sup>3</sup>	Québécois, Acadian, Franco-Ontarian, etc.
French Canadian	French Canadian	Québécois, Acadian, Franco-Ontarian, etc.
Québécois	Québécois	Québécois, Acadian, Franco-Ontarian, etc.

*Measuring Ethnicity in Canadian Censuses*

Comparison of Ethnic Origins Collected in 1991, 1986 and 1981 - Continued

1991 Classification	1986 Classification	1981 Classification
Austrian	Austrian	Austrian
Belgian	Belgian	Belgian
Flemish	Belgian	Belgian
Luxembourg	Luxembourg	Luxembourg
Swiss	Swiss	Swiss
Danish	Danish	Danish
Finnish	Finnish	Finnish
Icelandic	Icelandic	Icelander
Laplander	Other European, n.i.e.	Other European, n.e.s.
Norwegian	Norwegian	Norwegian
Swedish	Swedish	Swedish
Scandinavian, n.i.e.	Scandinavian, n.i.e.	Scandinavian, n.o.s., n.e.s.
Byelorussian	Byelorussian	Byelorussian
Czech	Czech	Czech
Czechoslovakian	Czechoslovakian	Czechoslovakian
Estonian	Estonian	Estonian
Hungarian (Magyar)	Hungarian (Magyar)	Magyar (Hungarian)
Latvian	Latvian	Lettish (Latvian)
Lithuanian	Lithuanian	Lithuanian
Romanian	Romanian	Romanian
Russian	Russian	Russian
Slovak	Slovak	Slovak
Albanian	Albanian	Albanian
Bulgar	Bulgar	Bulgarian
Croatian	Croatian	Croatian
Cypriot	Greek Cypriot, <sup>4</sup> Turkish Cypriot, <sup>4</sup> Cypriot	Greek Turk Greek
Greek	Greek	Greek
Macedonian	Macedonian	Macedonian
Maltese	Maltese	Maltese
Portuguese	Portuguese	Portuguese

**Comparison of Ethnic Origins Collected in 1991, 1986 and 1981 - Continued**

<b>1991 Classification</b>	<b>1986 Classification</b>	<b>1981 Classification</b>
Serbian	Serbian	Serbian
Slovenian	Slovenian	Slovene
Spanish	Spanish	Spanish
Yugoslav, n.i.e.	Yugoslav, n.i.e.	Yugoslav, n.o.s.
Basque	Other European, n.i.e.	Other European, n.e.s.
Gypsy	Other European, n.i.e.	Other European, n.e.s.
Other European, n.i.e.	Other European, n.i.e.	Other Balkan, n.e.s., Other European, n.e.s.
Afghan	Other Asian, n.i.e.	Other Pakistani- Bangladeshi, n.e.s.
Armenian	Armenian	Armenian
Iranian	Iranian	Iranian
Israeli	Israeli	Israeli
Kurdish	Arab, n.i.e.	Asian Arab, n.e.s.
Turk	Turk	Turk
West Asian, n.i.e.	Not included	Not included
Egyptian	Egyptian	Egyptian
Iraqi	Arab, n.i.e.	Asian Arab, n.e.s.
Lebanese	Lebanese	Lebanese
Maghrebian	Arab, n.i.e.	North African Arab, n.e.s.
Palestinian	Palestinian	Palestinian
Syrian	Syrian	Syrian
Arab, n.i.e.	Arab, n.i.e.	Asian Arab, n.e.s., North African Arab, n.i.e.
Punjabi	Punjabi	Punjabi
Singhalese	Singhalese	Singhalese
Tamil	Tamil	Tamil
Bangladeshi, n.i.e.	Bangladeshi, n.i.e.	Bangladeshi, n.o.s.
East Indian, n.i.e.	East Indian, n.i.e.	Indian, n.o.s., n.e.s.
Pakistani, n.i.e.	Pakistani, n.i.e.	Pakistani, n.o.s.
Sri Lankan, n.i.e.	Sri Lankan, n.i.e.	Sri Lankan (Ceylonese), n.o.s.



*Measuring Ethnicity in Canadian Censuses*

Comparison of Ethnic Origins Collected in 1991, 1986 and 1981 - Continued

1991 Classification	1986 Classification	1981 Classification
Burmese	Burmese	Burmese
Cambodian	Cambodian	Cambodian
Filipino	Filipino	Philippino
Indonesian	Indonesian	Indonesian
Japanese	Japanese	Japanese
Korean	Korean	Korean
Laotian	Laotian	Laotian
Malay	Malay	Malay
Mongolian	Chinese	Chinese
Tibetan	Chinese	Chinese
Thai	Thai	Thai
Vietnamese	Vietnamese	Vietnamese
Other Asian, n.i.e.	Other Asian, n.i.e.	Other Pakistani- Bangladeshi, Other Far East Asian, n.e.s.
Fijian	Fijian	Fijian
Polynesian	Polynesian	Polynesian
Other Pacific Islanders	Other Pacific Islanders	Other Pacific Islanders, n.e.s.
Argentinian	Argentinian	Argentinian
Brazilian	Brazilian	Brazilian
Chilean	Chilean	Chilean
Colombian	Other Latin/Central/ South American Origins	Other Latino-American
Ecuadorian	Ecuadorian	Ecuadorian
Guatemalan	Other Latin/Central/ South American Origins	Other Latino-American
Hispanic	Other Latin/Central/ South American Origins	Other Latino-American
Mexican	Mexican	Mexican
Nicaraguan	Other Latin/Central/ South American Origins	Other Latino-American
Peruvian	Peruvian	Peruvian
Salvadorean	Other Latin/Central/	Other Latino-American

**Comparison of Ethnic Origins Collected in 1991, 1986 and 1981 - Concluded**

<b>1991 Classification</b>	<b>1986 Classification</b>	<b>1981 Classification</b>
	South American Origins	
Other Latin/Central/ South American Origins	Other Latin/Central/ South American Origins	Other Latino-American
Barbadian	Other West Indian	Caribbean
Cuban	Cuban	Cuban
Haitian	Haitian	Haitian
Jamaican	Jamaican	Caribbean
Puerto Rican	Puerto Rican	Caribbean
Other Caribbean, n.i.e.	Other Caribbean, n.i.e.	Caribbean
Other West Indian, n.i.e.	Other West Indian	Caribbean
West Indian Black <sup>5</sup>	West Indian Black <sup>5</sup>	Black, n.e.s.
Black American <sup>5</sup>	Black American <sup>5</sup>	Black, n.e.s.
Canadian Black <sup>5</sup>	Canadian Black <sup>5</sup>	Canadian Black
Other Black <sup>5</sup>	Other Black <sup>5</sup>	Black, n.e.s.
African Black	African Black	African Black
Other African, n.i.e.	Other African, n.i.e.	Other African, n.e.s.
Other Aboriginal <sup>5</sup>	Other Aboriginal <sup>5</sup>	Amerindian, n.o.s., n.e.s.
American	American	American
Australian/New Zealander	Australian/New Zealander	Other Commonwealth
Canadian	Canadian	Canadian
Other, n.i.e.	Other, n.i.e.	Other, n.e.s.

\* Self-coded answers are listed in the order of appearance on the 1991 Census questionnaire.

In 1981, multiple responses were permitted for the first time. One write-in space was provided in addition to mark boxes. If more than one ethnic origin was written in the space provided, only the first write-in was coded.

The 1986 Census questionnaire allowed respondents to write in up to three ethnic origins not included in the mark boxes. This increased the number of multiple response possibilities. If more than three ethnic origins were written in the spaces provided, then only the first three were coded.

## *Measuring Ethnicity in Canadian Censuses*

The 1991 Census questionnaire allows respondents to write in up to two ethnic origins not included in the mark boxes. If more than the two ethnic origins were written in the spaces provided, only the first two were coded.

**Note:** n.i.e. = not included elsewhere  
n.e.s. = not elsewhere specified  
n.o.s. = not otherwise specified

### **Notes**

1. Eskimo was added to the 1991 Census questionnaire in order to avoid response errors. The category of Inuit/Eskimo was shown as "Inuit" in the 1991 published output.
2. In 1981 and 1986, the coding of the ethnic origin answers was a manual operation. This operation was an automated one in 1991.
3. As a result of coding errors, Franco-Manitoban and Franco-Ontarian origins are not shown in 1986 published output.
4. As a result of low response counts, Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot are not shown in 1986 published output. Greek Cypriot was made a multiple response of Greek and Cypriot. Turkish Cypriot was made a multiple response of Turk and Cypriot. In 1991, Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot were coded again as multiple responses.
5. These answers are standardized on the final database in 1986 and 1991:
  - Other Aboriginal is combined with the North American Indian self-coded answer.
  - Other Black is combined with the Black self-coded answer.
  - West Indian Black is made a multiple response of Other West Indian, n.i.e. and the Black self-coded answer.
  - Black American is made a multiple response of American and the Black self-coded answer.
  - Canadian Black is made a multiple response of Canadian and the Black self-coded answer.



# Appendix C

Table 1. Population by Ethnic Origin, Canada, 1986 Census - Continued

Total Population	25,022,005	Slovenian	5,890
Single origins	18,035,665	Yugoslav, n.i.e.	51,205
British origins(1)	6,332,725	Cypriot	315
English	4,742,040	Greek	143,780
Irish	669,680	Italian	709,590
Scottish	865,445	Maltese	15,345
Welsh	23,395	Portuguese	199,595
British, n.i.e.(2)	805	Spanish	57,125
Other British	1,360	Other European origins	249,125
French origins(1)	6,093,165	Jewish	245,855
French	6,087,310	Other European, n.i.e.	3,270
Acadian	3,040	Asian and African origins	985,930
French Canadian	1,025	Arab origins	72,320
Québécois	1,790	Egyptian	11,580
European origins	3,913,235	Lebanese	29,345
Western European origins	1,321,465	Palestinian	1,075
Austrian	24,900	Syrian	3,045
Belgian	28,395	Arab, n.i.e.	27,270
Dutch (Netherlands)	351,765	West Asian origins	41,305
German	896,715	Armenian	22,525
Luxembourg	560	Iranian	13,325
Swiss	19,130	Israeli	390
Northern European origins	212,280	Turk	5,065
Finnish	40,565	South Asian origins	266,800
Scandinavian	171,715	Bengali	390
Danish	39,950	Gujarati	690
Icelandic	14,470	Punjabi	10,870
Norwegian	61,580	Singhalese	745
Swedish	43,335	Tamil	1,280
Scandinavian, n.i.e.	12,375	Bangladeshi, n.i.e.	1,485
Eastern European origins	888,195	East Indian, n.i.e.	220,625
Baltic origins	40,540	Pakistani, n.i.e.	24,880
Estonian	13,200	Sri Lankan, n.i.e.	5,835
Latvian	12,620	East and South East Asian origins	600,530
Lithuanian	14,725	Chinese	93,280
Byelorussian	970	Filipino	74,785
Czech and Slovak	55,530	Indo-Chinese Origins	600
Czech	20,380	Burmese	10,365
Czechoslovakian	18,830	Cambodian	9,575
Slovak	16,320	Laotian	1,230
Hungarian (Magyar)	97,845	Thai	53,010
Polish	222,260	Vietnamese	1,260
Romanian	18,745	Indonesian	40,245
Russian	32,080	Japanese	27,680
Ukrainian	420,210	Korean	810
Southern European origins	1,242,170	Malay	2,145
Balkans	116,420	Other Asian, n.i.e.(3)	4,980
Albanian	875	African origins(4)	6,625
Bulgar	2,465	Pacific Islands origins	6,030
Croatian	35,115	Fijian	230
Macedonian	11,355	Polynesian	355
Serbian	9,510	Other Pacific Islanders	

## Measuring Ethnicity in Canadian Censuses

Table 1. Population by Ethnic Origin, Canada, 1986 Census - Concluded

Latin, Central and South American origins	32,235	Other origins	75,040
Argentinian	1,280	American	4,195
Brazilian	1,365	Australian/New Zealander	1,395
Chilean	8,070	Canadian	69,065
Ecuadorian	1,240	Other, n.i.e.	390
Mexican	3,000	Multiple Origins(5)	6,986,345
Peruvian	2,620	British only(6)	2,073,830
Other Latin/Central/South	14,660	British and French	1,139,340
Caribbean origins	48,475	British and other	2,262,525
Cuban	410	French only(7)	5,390
Haitian	10,865	French and other	325,655
Jamaican	11,210	British, French and other	563,065
Puerto Rican	375	Other multiple origins	615,995
Other Caribbean, n.i.e.	950		
Other West Indian	24,670		
Black origins	174,970		
Black	170,345		
African Black	4,630		
Aboriginal Peoples	373,265		
Inuit	27,290		
Métis	59,745		
North American Indian	286,230		

n.e.s. = not elsewhere specified.

n.i.e. = not included elsewhere

n.o.s. = not otherwise specified.

(1)... See the end of the table for British, French and other multiple origins.

(2)... The British only multiple category includes persons who report more than one of the following origins: English, Irish, Scottish, Welsh, British, n.i.e. and Other British. In 1981, British only multiple responses were included in the single response British, n.o.s. category. In 1986, these responses are listed as multiple ethnic responses.

(3)... Also includes other South Asian Origins. In the 1981 Census, Other Asian, n.i.e. was collected as two separate categories. Other Far East Asia, n.e.s. and Other Pakistani-Bangladeshi, n.e.s.

(4)... Includes Other African, n.i.e. For a complete count of African Origins, also include the count for African Black (found under Black Origins).

(5)... Includes persons who report more than one ethnic origin.

(6)... The British only multiple category included persons who report more than one of the following origins: English, Irish, Scottish, Welsh, British, n.i.e. and Other British. See footnote 2.

(7)... The French only multiple category includes persons who report more than one of the following origins: French, Acadian, Franco-Manitoban, Franco-Ontarian, French Canadian and Québécois.

**Table 2. Population by Selected Ethnic Origins, showing Single and Multiple Origins, for Canada, 1986 Census (1)**

<b>Ethnic Origin</b>	<b>Single Origins(2)</b>	<b>Multiple Origins(2)</b>	<b>Ethnic Origin</b>	<b>Single Origins(2)</b>	<b>Multiple Origins(2)</b>
English	4,742,040	4,561,910	Lebanese	29,345	15,685
Irish	699,685	2,922,610	Palestinian	1,075	525
Scottish	865,450	3,052,605	Syrian	3,045	4,135
Welsh	23,390	126,885	Arab, n.i.e.	27,275	10,225
Other British	1,360	3,925	Armenian	22,525	4,870
French	6,087,310	2,027,945	Iranian	13,325	2,425
Acadian	3,040	5,320	Turk	5,065	2,495
French Canadian	1,025	1,525	Bangladeshi, n.i.e.	1,480	185
Québécois	1,790	2,340	Pakistani, n.i.e.	24,885	6,770
Austrian	24,900	49,735	Punjabi	10,865	4,680
Belgian	28,395	46,400	Sri Lankan, n.i.e.	5,830	1,455
Bulgar	2,465	3,465	Tamil	1,280	920
Croatian	35,120	9,050	East Indian, n.i.e.	220,625	40,805
Czech	20,380	19,255	Cambodian	10,365	1,425
Czechoslovakian	18,830	24,605	Chinese	360,315	53,725
Danish	39,955	79,110	Filipino	93,280	13,775
Dutch (Netherlands)	351,760	530,170	Indonesian	1,265	2,265
Estonian	13,200	7,330	Japanese	40,245	14,255
Finnish	40,565	50,775	Laotian	9,575	1,510
German	896,715	1,570,335	Korean	27,680	2,025
Greek	143,785	33,530	Thai	1,225	1,700
Hungarian (Magyar)	97,850	91,150	Vietnamese	53,010	9,980
Icelandic	14,470	39,290	Other Asian, n.i.e.(3)	2,145	935
Italian	709,590	297,325	African Origins(4)	4,985	5,280
Jewish	245,855	97,650	Fijian	6,035	2,000
Latvian	12,615	7,385	Argentinian	1,275	1,290
Lithuanian	14,725	12,220	Brazilian	1,365	1,675
Macedonian	11,355	5,920	Chilean	8,070	2,310
Maltese	15,345	8,930	Ecuadorian	1,240	320
Norwegian	61,580	182,100	Mexican	3,005	5,135
Polish	222,260	389,840	Peruvian	2,620	1,605
Portuguese	199,595	37,585	Other Latin/Central/ South American Origins	14,660	6,025
Romanian	18,745	32,590	Haitian	10,865	6,140
Russian	32,085	71,580	Jamaican	11,210	8,505
Scandinavian, n.i.e.	12,375	19,445	Other West Indian	24,670	15,620
Serbian	9,510	3,455	Black	170,340	83,775
Slovak	16,325	11,380	African Black	4,630	4,130
Slovenian	5,895	2,230	Inuit	27,285	9,180
Spanish	57,130	56,040	Métis	59,745	91,865
Swedish	43,335	160,535	North American Indian	286,230	262,730
Swiss	19,130	41,145	American	4,195	19,200
Ukrainian	420,210	541,100	Australian/New Zealander	1,395	7,145
Yugoslav, n.i.e.	51,200	33,370	Canadian	69,060	43,765
Other European, n.i.e.	3,270	3,770			
Egyptian	11,580	4,135			

n.i.e. = not included elsewhere

(1)... Includes only those ethnic origins with single counts of 1,000 and over.

(2)... The total of single and multiple responses will be greater than the total population due to reporting of multiple ethnic responses for each group. For example, a respondent giving the origin "French and Italian" will be shown in the multiple French group and in the multiple Italian group.

(3)... Also includes other South Asian Origins. In the 1981 Census, Other Asian, n.i.e. was collected as two separate categories, Other Far East Asian, n.e.s. and Other Pakistani-Bangladeshi, n.e.s.

(4)... Includes Other African, n.i.e. For a complete count of African origins, also include the count for African Black.





# *Ethnic Group and the British Census*<sup>1</sup>

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## **Introduction**

The Census of Population in Great Britain is taken with the authority of the Census Act 1920. Though the schedule to the Act specifies that "nationality, birthplace, race (and) language" may be part of the census, the 1991 Census was the first time that a question on ethnic group was included.

In every British census since 1841 people have been asked to state their country of birth, as well as (usually) their nationality. This is because throughout its history Britain has received many immigrants from elsewhere. When in the 1950s there began an influx of people from other continents – mainly from the West Indies, East Africa and Asia – there was nothing historically unique about this event, except for the important fact that, unlike most of their predecessors, these later immigrants were clearly distinguishable from the indigenous population by the colour of their skins.

Information collected from sample surveys has shown that Blacks and Asians in Britain tend to have higher levels of unemployment, less well-paid jobs and poorer housing conditions than other groups and that their children have greater difficulty in realising their full educational potential at school. (See, for example, Brown 1984 and Sillitoe and Meltzer 1985.)

For these reasons and because of the need to know the extent to which equal opportunity programmes are succeeding in reducing the inequalities resulting from discriminatory practices, it is most desirable that reliable information be obtained about Blacks and Asians at regular intervals.

The census is the most important statistical operation in Britain. It collects information about every person in the country and produces a wide range of essential information for government, commerce and industry (Her Majesty's Government 1988). The amount of money local authorities receive for schools, housing, roads and other vital services and the resources allocated to health authorities are calculated on the basis of figures provided by the census. Only the census can provide uniform information both about the country as a whole and about individual areas. As there is a continuity of statistics from census to census, it shows how conditions are changing over time.

## *Ethnic Group and the British Census*

The census offices have given examples of how information about ethnic group from the 1991 Census will be used by the government, health authorities and local authorities. To quote from their leaflet (Office of Population Censuses and Surveys 1990):

It is Government policy, backed by law, to eliminate racial discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity for people of all ethnic groups. Good information is essential if this policy is to be properly implemented and if a proper check is to be kept on progress.

Accurate statistics on ethnic groups, both nationally and locally, will help central government, local government, health authorities, private employers and voluntary bodies to know what inequalities there are and to plan action to overcome them.

Areas in which census information can help include housing, education, training, jobs, health services and a wide range of other public and community services.

Census information will also help bodies such as Race Equality Councils to assess inequality, who should be putting it right and what progress is being made.

The availability of reliable detailed facts at the local planning level rather than rough estimates and guesswork will provide an improved basis for tackling racial discrimination and disadvantage.

**LOCAL SERVICES:** Census information will help local authorities plan their services with ethnic minority groups in mind. This will include provision for children, education, care of the elderly, housing and leisure services.

Local authorities in England and Wales can apply for a government grant for certain types of special provision for members of ethnic minority groups subject to a proven case being made on the basis of local evidence. Such payments currently exceed £100 million per year.

**HEALTH:** Census information will be used in planning and providing health services. Health authorities need to plan services to deal with the differing needs of ethnic minorities. Perhaps even more importantly, they need to ensure that ethnic minorities have proper access to the whole range of health services.

**URBAN REGENERATION:** The urban programme supports schemes which benefit disadvantaged minorities, such as certain ethnic groups, in inner city areas.

**EMPLOYMENT:** The census will provide information on employment and unemployment among all ethnic groups in local areas. Together with the information on qualifications, this



will help in the planning of local employment and training schemes which take into account the particular needs of ethnic minority groups.

Employers need information on the numbers and distribution of ethnic minority groups in the population as a whole and in local areas to be sure they are meeting their aims as equal opportunity employers.

Up until 1981, the census offices – Office of Population Censuses and Surveys (OPCS) in England and Wales, the General Register Office for Scotland – used birthplace (of head of household, and in 1971 of the parents of household members) to provide information on the circumstances of ethnic groups. However, with the inevitable rise in the numbers of Black and Asian children with parents born in Britain, this was becoming an increasingly unreliable indicator of ethnic group. The absence of *reliable* information on ethnic group from the 1981 Census caused OPCS itself to begin to use other data sources such as sample surveys for national estimates of the population in ethnic minority groups (OPCS 1986a). There was no source, however, of local information and there could not be until a suitable question was added to the census.

### **The Development of the Ethnic Group Classification**

In most countries of the world which have populations of differing origins and diverse cultures, the national censuses have for a long time asked everyone to state their race or ethnic group. The wording of the questions and the types of classification that are employed for this purpose vary greatly, however. They differ because the criteria by which the various groups are distinguished in each country depend on a web of historical, social and political factors. In some countries (such as Canada) the emphasis is upon the country from which a person's ancestors are thought to have originated. In other places (such as India) people are distinguished by religion and language, or caste/tribe. Whilst elsewhere (as in the U.S.A. and countries of the Caribbean) the population is classified on a variety of criteria, including skin colour, national origin, language and culture.

As circumstances vary so much between countries, the United Nations, although recommending the collection of data on ethnic group in national censuses, has concluded that there are no universally acceptable criteria for classifying a nation's population (United Nations Economic and Social Council 1977). In Britain as elsewhere, therefore, it has been necessary to devise questions and a system of classification which suit national needs.

To be effective an ethnic classification has to be both intelligible and acceptable to all sections of the population; it has also to furnish the information in the form in which it is needed. To satisfy the main purpose for which the data are wanted in Great Britain it must distinguish reliably all people who belong to groups which are susceptible to discrimination because of their

## *Ethnic Group and the British Census*

ethnicity. The only way to develop an acceptable classification and question is to test a variety of alternative designs on samples of all the main ethnic groups. As this paper will show, such tests have demonstrated that the various aims are not always compatible and that the final design has to be a compromise between conflicting objectives.

### **Field Trials of Questions About Ethnic Group**

In 1975 the OPCS started a series of field trials to develop and devise a direct question on race or ethnicity that would be acceptable to the general public and provide more reliable information than a question on parents' birthplaces. The procedure used in all the field trials simulated the methods used in an actual census, i.e. an interviewer delivered a (trial) census form to each of the sample households and arranged to call back to collect and check the completed form a few days later. The exception was the final census test for the 1991 Census, which took place in April 1989, when in a variation on the usual design, interviewers were used to carry out a follow-up survey of households which had been included in the census test. The 1989 census test and follow-up survey are described more fully below.

The interviewers who worked on these field trials were trained and experienced in conducting social survey interviews. OPCS used permanent members of its Social Survey Division Field Force, which is a separate body from the census enumerators who are recruited temporarily to deliver and collect census forms. To obtain samples suited to our purposes, it was necessary to concentrate upon areas containing sizeable numbers of persons in the appropriate groups. To target the sample more efficiently, where possible, households belonging to relevant ethnic groups were selected by name from the electoral rolls. Otherwise random samples of households were taken.

### **The First Series of Field Trials (1975-79)**

During the period 1975-77 four alternative designs for a question were tested in three separate field trials (see Sillitoe 1978) for a full account). Following these field trials, Sillitoe recommended the question illustrated in Figure 1 for use in censuses and surveys.

**Figure 1. Design of Question Recommended Following the Field Trials of 1975-1977**

<p><b>RACE or ETHNIC GROUP/DESCENT</b></p> <p>Please tick the appropriate box to show the race to which the person belongs.</p> <p>For someone who was born in the United Kingdom, but whose race is not 'White' tick one of the boxes number 2 to 10 to show from which group the person is descended.</p> <p>If the person's race or ethnic group is <u>not one of those listed</u> or if the person is descended from <u>more than one</u>, tick box 10 and describe in full, in the space provided.</p>	<table> <tr><td>1</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>White</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>West Indian</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>African</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>Indian</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>Pakistani</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>Bangladeshi</td></tr> <tr><td>7</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>Arab</td></tr> <tr><td>8</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>Turkish</td></tr> <tr><td>9</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>Chinese</td></tr> <tr><td>10</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>Any other race or ethnic group, or if of mixed racial or ethnic descent (please describe below)</td></tr> </table> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	White	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	West Indian	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	African	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	Indian	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pakistani	6	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bangladeshi	7	<input type="checkbox"/>	Arab	8	<input type="checkbox"/>	Turkish	9	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chinese	10	<input type="checkbox"/>	Any other race or ethnic group, or if of mixed racial or ethnic descent (please describe below)
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	White																													
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	West Indian																													
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	African																													
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	Indian																													
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pakistani																													
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9	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chinese																													
10	<input type="checkbox"/>	Any other race or ethnic group, or if of mixed racial or ethnic descent (please describe below)																													

The test findings had shown that the main difficulty with the recommended design was in relation to the classification of people of West Indian descent. Whereas other ethnic minorities were usually satisfied for their U.K.-born members to be described as "Indian," "Chinese," etc., many West Indians felt that it was inappropriate to describe people who had been born in Britain in terms of their forebears' geographic origins. It was also noteworthy that in all three field trials it was found that West Indians objected more frequently than other groups to being asked any sort of question about their race or ethnicity - on principle, or because they were dubious about the reasons for which the information was being sought. It was clear, therefore, that further measures needed to be taken to make a census question more acceptable to West Indians.

One way to accommodate the preferences of West Indian respondents was to add another category to the classification specifically for Afro-Caribbeans born in Britain, described perhaps as "Black British." This would be analogous to the use of the term Black in the censuses of the U.S.A. and the countries of the Caribbean, to describe people of African descent and would also be compatible with our use of the term White to describe persons of European origin. This solution was, however, held to be unacceptable on the grounds that it placed too much emphasis on racial or colour distinctions (OPCS 1980). The government's view at that time was that although the use of the term White was acceptable in voluntary social surveys (a question similar to that illustrated in Figure 1 has been used in the OPCS Labour Force Survey for a number of years now, see OPCS 1986b), in a compulsory census terms such as "White" and "Black" should be avoided. Instead, OPCS were asked to try to find an alternative system of classification couched exclusively in ethnic terms, which avoided employing the words White and Black.



## *Ethnic Group and the British Census*

Three new designs were devised for the next field trial in 1978, an account of which is given in Sillitoe (1981). None of these designs displayed the potential for developing into a form which would be generally acceptable and provide sufficiently reliable results.

It was agreed, therefore, for the next test in 1979, to try a modified version of the earlier recommended design. To avoid the term White, the first category was described as "English, Welsh, Scottish or Irish" and a further category was inserted, labelled "other European": see Figure 2, design V(B). As this design would almost certainly encounter some of the same difficulties and objections as were aroused by the designs used in earlier tests, it was also agreed to test whether it might be better to revert to the parents' birthplace question used in the 1971 Census: see Figure 2, design V(A).

**Figure 2. Questions Used in the April 1979 Census Test**

<p><b>V(A) Parents' country of birth</b></p> <p>Write the country of birth of</p> <p>a     the person's father</p> <p>b     the person's mother</p> <p>This question should be answered even if the person's father or mother is no longer alive (If country not known, write 'NOT KNOWN').</p> <p>Give the name by which the country is known today</p>	<p>a     Father born in (country)</p> <p>_____</p> <p>b     Mother born in (country)</p> <p>_____</p>
<p><b>V(B) Racial or ethnic group</b></p> <p>Please tick the appropriate box to show the racial group to which the person belongs.</p> <p>If the person was born in the United Kingdom of West Indian, African, Asian, Arab, Chinese or 'Other European' descent, please tick one of the boxes numbered 2 to 10 to show the group from which the person is descended.</p>	<p>1     <input type="checkbox"/> English, Welsh, Scottish or Irish</p> <p>2     <input type="checkbox"/> Other European</p> <p>3     <input type="checkbox"/> West Indian or Guyanese</p> <p>4     <input type="checkbox"/> African</p> <p>5     <input type="checkbox"/> Indian</p> <p>6     <input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani</p> <p>7     <input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi</p> <p>8     <input type="checkbox"/> Arab</p> <p>9     <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese</p> <p>10    <input type="checkbox"/> Any other racial or ethnic group, or if of mixed racial or ethnic descent (Please describe below)</p> <p>_____</p>

The 1979 field trial was carried out in the London Borough of Haringey, in conjunction with a full-scale census test which rehearsed all the arrangements for the forthcoming Census of 1981, including the recruitment and training of enumerators, field procedures and data processing. Conducting the field trial in association with the census test made it possible to assess the

acceptability to the public of an ethnicity question under field conditions closely resembling those of a real census, with all its accompanying publicity.

In this census test, two versions of the census form (one with the race/ethnicity question and the other containing the parents' birthplace question) were issued alternately to each address.

The main findings from the fifth field trial was that co-operation from the public, in both the census test and the social survey field trial, was seriously affected by a campaign conducted by some local organisations which urged people not to answer any questions about their ethnicity, their birthplaces, their parents' countries of birth or their nationality. These campaigners claimed that the collection of this information was linked with proposals to change the nationality laws in a manner that would jeopardize the status of all ethnic minorities in Britain.

Consequently:

1. Only 54 percent of the households in the census test returned their forms, compared with a rate of about 70 percent which had been achieved previously on tests of this kind.
2. The numbers of people who objected in principle to questions on ethnic group rose to unprecedented levels. As many as 32 percent of both the West Indian and the Asian form-fillers who had been issued with the census form containing the ethnicity question design V(B) said that they thought it was wrong to include such a question in a census, and the proportion expressing similar views about the question on their parents' birthplaces was even higher, at 37 percent – despite the fact that this question had been used successfully in the 1971 Census.

In view of these results and after conducting further consultations with numerous organisations representing ethnic minorities in Britain, the government decided that, in the 1981 Census, the question on parents' birthplace which had been used in the 1971 Census would not be repeated, neither would an attempt be made to replace it by a direct question on race or ethnicity of the kind tested in this series of field trials.

### **The Second Series of Field Trials (1985-86)**

A census of population was successfully conducted in 1981, but the absence of a question on ethnic group or parents' birthplace made the census much less useful for statistics on the size and distribution of ethnic groups than it might otherwise have been.

In a parliamentary report issued in May 1983 (House of Commons 1983), the Home Affairs Sub-committee on Race Relations and Immigration regretted the decision not to include a question on ethnic origin in the census. They reviewed the need for information about ethnic

## *Ethnic Group and the British Census*

groups and reported that the most important beneficiaries of monitoring ethnic groups would be the minorities themselves, noting that sample surveys were hopelessly inaccurate at small area level. They proposed, therefore, that the OPCS be asked to carry out a further series of tests to try again to develop an improved design of question on race or ethnicity for possible inclusion in the 1991 Census. The report also recommended that "the form of questions should not compel people to define themselves solely by their own or their ancestors' immigrant origin" and that the form of question "should enable people to identify themselves in a way acceptable to them whilst at the same time meeting the needs of users who need to measure disadvantage and discrimination." It was accepted that the terms White and Black would need to be employed, in order to devise a more acceptable and effective system of classification. To emphasise this point further, MPs suggested a possible question design which incorporated both these terms; see Figure 3. Additionally the report recommended that OPCS should include a question on religion for southern Asian groups only. In its reply (Her Majesty's Government 1984) the government accepted these recommendations in principle and agreed to carry out whatever tests were necessary to see whether a reliable and publicly accepted question could be developed so that it could be included in the 1991 Census.

**Figure 3. Question recommended by the Home Affairs Sub-Committee**

RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AND DISADVANTAGE	
The answers to these questions will help Government, local authorities, employers and other organisations to identify racial discrimination and disadvantage, to develop more effective policies against them, and to monitor the progress of these policies.	
a. Are you White?	Yes/no
b. Are you Black? If you are Black, are you	Yes/no <input type="checkbox"/> British <input type="checkbox"/> West Indian <input type="checkbox"/> African <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Tick as many boxes as apply	
c. Are you of Asian origin? If yes, are you	Yes/no <input type="checkbox"/> British <input type="checkbox"/> Indian <input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani <input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi <input type="checkbox"/> West Indian <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese <input type="checkbox"/> Vietnamese <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Tick as many boxes as apply	
d. Other groups Are you	<input type="checkbox"/> Mixed race <input type="checkbox"/> Arab <input type="checkbox"/> Greek Cypriot <input type="checkbox"/> Turkish Cypriot <input type="checkbox"/> None of these
Tick one box	



Thus, in effect, it was now possible to take up the development of a race/ethnicity question from the stage reached in 1977 after the third test in the first series, when the recommended design illustrated in Figure 1 had been produced. Although this design had since been used successfully for some years in voluntary surveys, we needed to modify the method by which persons born in Britain of immigrant descent were classified.

The race/ethnicity question used in the first of this series of field trials (Figure 4) was based on the earlier recommendation, modified in three ways:

1. Two additional categories, "Black British" and "British Asian," were added to the list of the ethnic categories: the first being for persons of African or Afro-Caribbean descent born in Britain, and the second for the corresponding group of U.K.-born persons of Asian descent.
2. To assess the effect of incorporating a subsidiary question on the religion of southern Asians, two alternative designs were tested, one with and one without the religion question. (Figure 4 illustrates the version with a religion question.)
3. As all the previous tests had shown that people of mixed descent often preferred not to be distinguished as a separate group, the instructions were changed to give form-fillers the option to tick the ethnic group "to which the person considered he or she belonged," or (as before) to tick a separate box and to describe the person's ancestry.

**Figure 4. Question design VIA. Tested in October 1985**

<p><b>10 Race or Ethnic Origin</b></p> <p>Please tick the appropriate box.</p> <p style="margin-top: 20px;">If the person is descended from more than one group, please tick the one to which the person considers he or she belongs, or tick box 12 and describe the person's ancestry in the space provided</p> <p style="margin-top: 100px;">If of Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi or Sri Lankan origin or descent, please also tick one of these boxes →</p>	<div style="margin-bottom: 20px;"> <p>1 <input type="checkbox"/> White</p> <p>2 <input type="checkbox"/> Black British <i>(i.e. born in England, Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland, of African or Afro-Caribbean descent)</i></p> <p>3 <input type="checkbox"/> British Asian <i>(i.e. born in England, Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland, of Asian descent)</i></p> <p>4 <input type="checkbox"/> West Indian or Guyanese</p> <p>5 <input type="checkbox"/> Indian</p> <p>6 <input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani</p> <p>7 <input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi</p> <p>8 <input type="checkbox"/> African</p> <p>9 <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese</p> <p>10 <input type="checkbox"/> Arab</p> <p>11 <input type="checkbox"/> Turkish or Turkish Cypriot</p> <p>12 <input type="checkbox"/> Any other race or ethnic group or if of mixed descent ↓</p> </div> <p style="text-align: center;">Please describe below</p> <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin: 10px 0;"/> <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin: 10px 0;"/> <div style="margin-top: 20px;"> <p><b>Religion</b></p> <table style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr> <td>Muslim</td> <td>Hindu</td> <td>Sikh</td> <td>Other</td> <td>None</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>5</td> </tr> </table> </div>	Muslim	Hindu	Sikh	Other	None	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5
Muslim	Hindu	Sikh	Other	None												
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>												
1	2	3	4	5												

A detailed account of the field trial of this question, and other designs tested in 1985-86 is given in Sillitoe (1987).

The main findings from this sixth field trial were as follows:

1. Confining the description British Asian to persons born in Britain was not acceptable, as many Asians who had been born overseas in countries of the British Commonwealth naturally felt that they also should be described as British.
2. The response to the subsidiary question on religion confirmed that southern Asians generally approved of a question of this type and that the standard of their answers was usually very good. However, although this demonstrated that it would be a viable question for inclusion in a census, the test also showed that the addition of a religion question had no discernible effect on the quality of the answers given by southern Asians to the main ethnicity question.
3. Giving people the option to record mixed descent in whichever manner they preferred appeared to have worked well. Unlike in previous tests, virtually no difficulties or objections were recorded with this method.

None of the designs tested after 1985 included a religion question for southern Asians. This was partly because the inclusion of such a question had been shown not to improve the quality of answers to the main ethnicity question and also because it had been argued that asking only one section of the population to state their religion would be difficult to defend. Finally, legal advice was that the inclusion of a question on religion in the census would probably require an amendment to the Census Act. (Northern Ireland, where a voluntary question on religion is included in the census, is covered by separate legislation.)

As the last test had shown that it was unacceptable to limit the description British Asian to persons born in Britain, the only alternative, if the term British was to be used, was to include it in the list of ethnic groups and to allow people to choose whichever description was preferred. This was the system employed in the question design that had been suggested by the Home Affairs Committee.

The problem with giving all members of the ethnic minorities the option of describing themselves as British was that many persons born overseas would undoubtedly prefer to classify themselves in this way, rather than in a more explicit way, whereas some who had been born in Britain would almost certainly still choose to describe themselves as Indian or Chinese, etc. Thus, the ethnic data produced by a design of this type would be of very limited value and in practice would produce a classification of the whole population based largely on each person's race or skin colour only. This would be a particular disadvantage in relation to Asians, as people of (say) Chinese descent would then be indistinguishable from those of Indian or Pakistani descent, etc., who were likely to have different socio-economic and demographic characteristics.



## Ethnic Group and the British Census

It was decided, therefore, that the next field trial would concentrate on demonstrating the degree to which the general acceptability of an ethnicity question was enhanced by allowing everyone to classify themselves as British, if they so wished, as against the cost of such a design, in terms of the reduced usefulness of the data it would furnish. For this, two new designs were produced.

The first of these designs, illustrated in Figure 5, required only one box to be ticked for each person and allowed the form-filler the choice of recording members of the household either as West Indian, Chinese, other White, etc, or alternatively as Black British, Asian British, or White British. In the other design (Figure 6) two boxes had to be ticked for all persons who were Black or Asian: one to indicate the person's race or colour and the other to show the ethnic group to which he or she belonged. In this question there was no category British offered for any group.

Figure 5. Question design VIIA, Tested in January 1986

<p><b>10 Race or Ethnic Group</b></p> <p>Please tick the appropriate box</p> <p>If the person is descended from more than one group, please tick the one to which the person considers he or she belongs, or tick box 13 and describe the person's ancestry in the space provided.</p>		<p>1 <input type="checkbox"/> British</p> <p>White 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Other White (please describe below)</p> <hr/> <p>3 <input type="checkbox"/> British</p> <p>4 <input type="checkbox"/> West Indian</p> <p>Black 5 <input type="checkbox"/> African</p> <p>6 <input type="checkbox"/> Other Black (please describe below)</p> <hr/> <p>7 <input type="checkbox"/> British</p> <p>8 <input type="checkbox"/> Indian</p> <p>9 <input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani</p> <p>Asian 10 <input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi</p> <p>11 <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese</p> <p>12 <input type="checkbox"/> Other Asian (please describe below)</p> <hr/> <p>Any other race or ethnic group 13 <input type="checkbox"/> Please describe below:</p> <hr/> <hr/>
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**Figure 6. Question design VIIB. Tested in January 1986**

<p><b>10 Race or Ethnic Group</b></p> <p>Please tick the appropriate box or boxes</p> <p>If the person is descended from more than one group, please tick the one to which the person considers he or she belongs, or tick box 4 and describe the person's ancestry in the space provided.</p>	<p>1 <input type="checkbox"/> White</p> <p>2 <input type="checkbox"/> Black ↓</p> <p><i>Please also tick one of boxes below, to show ethnic origin:</i></p> <p>5 <input type="checkbox"/> Afro-Caribbean</p> <p>6 <input type="checkbox"/> African</p> <p>7 <input type="checkbox"/> Other Black (please describe below)</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>3 <input type="checkbox"/> Asian ↓</p> <p><i>Please also tick one of the boxes below, to show ethnic origin:</i></p> <p>8 <input type="checkbox"/> Indian</p> <p>9 <input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani</p> <p>10 <input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi</p> <p>11 <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese</p> <p>12 <input type="checkbox"/> Other Asian (please describe below)</p> <p>_____</p> <p>4 <input type="checkbox"/> Any other race or ethnic group (please describe below)</p> <p>_____</p>
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## *Ethnic Group and the British Census*

The main finding of these field trials was that form-fillers tended to find the design illustrated in Figure 5 confusing and the general standard of their answers was not as good as in previous tests. Also, design VIIA furnished much less informative data about the ethnic grouping of people born in Britain of immigrant descent: three quarters of whom were shown simply as Black British, Asian British or White British.

However, design VIIA proved to be more acceptable to West Indians than the alternative design. West Indian informants had two important criticisms of design VIIB. One in 10 disliked or were confused by the expression Afro-Caribbean (used experimentally in this test in place of West Indian) and a similar proportion would have preferred U.K.-born Blacks to have been described as Black British or by some equivalent expression.

As the field trials had shown that the term British was unsuitable because of the confusion that it produced, it was agreed with the Commission for Racial Equality that we would test a new design which circumvented the need for a British category, by using a type of classification that placed less stress on the ethnic origins of Blacks: see Figure 7 (design VIIC). In this design, instead of asking for people to be designated separately as West Indians or as African, all Black groups were merged into one category described as "Black, West Indian or African."

**Figure 7. Question design VIIC. Tested in October 1986**

<p><b>10 Race or Ethnic Group</b></p> <p>Please tick the appropriate box</p> <p>If the person is descended from more than one group please tick the one to which the person considers he or she belongs, or tick box 9 and describe the person's ancestry in the space provided.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>1 <input type="checkbox"/> White</li><li>2 <input type="checkbox"/> Black, West Indian or African</li><li>3 <input type="checkbox"/> Indian</li><li>4 <input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani</li><li>5 <input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi</li><li>6 <input type="checkbox"/> East African Asian</li><li>7 <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese</li><li>8 <input type="checkbox"/> Arab</li><li>9 <input type="checkbox"/> Any other race or ethnic group (please describe below)</li></ul> <hr/> <hr/>
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The next field trial compared a modified design VIIB, West Indian replacing Afro-Caribbean, with design VIIIC. The main findings were that both of the ethnicity question designs tested this time were notably more effective than any of their predecessors – particularly design VIIIC. Some West Indian form-fillers issued with design VIIIC continued to express a wish for a separate Black British (or similar) category, because the new category "Black, West Indian or African" persisted in referring to their overseas origins.

### **The April 1989 Census Test**

Following extensive consultations with the Commission for Racial Equality and representatives of ethnic minority groups, the Government published its proposals for a question on ethnic group (Her Majesty's Government 1988). The question proposed in the White Paper is illustrated in Figure 8. In form it was very close to that tested in October 1986 and illustrated in Figure 7. This was the most successful of all the questions tested but in the government's proposal there were three modifications. Firstly, it was expected on the basis of the evidence accumulated that the description of persons of West Indian or African descent as Black without further geographical qualifications would tend to make the question more acceptable to the relevant ethnic groups. Secondly, the category East African Asian was not to be included because it was found to be more confusing than helpful. Finally the category "Arab" had been dropped. As with several other identifiable groups which formed a relatively small proportion of the national population it had been decided that the case for including them as a category in the national census was not sufficiently strong.

**Figure 8. Proposed Question for inclusion in the 1991 Census (as at July 1988, later modified)**

<p><b>10 Ethnic Group</b></p> <p>Please tick the appropriate box</p> <p>If the person is descended from more than one group, please tick the one to which the person considers he or she belongs, or tick box 7 and describe the person's ancestry in the space provided.</p>	<table> <tr><td>1</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> White</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> Black</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> Indian</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> Chinese</td></tr> <tr><td>7</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> Any other ethnic group (please describe below)</td></tr> <tr><td colspan="2"><hr/></td></tr> <tr><td colspan="2"><hr/></td></tr> </table>	1	<input type="checkbox"/> White	2	<input type="checkbox"/> Black	3	<input type="checkbox"/> Indian	4	<input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani	5	<input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi	6	<input type="checkbox"/> Chinese	7	<input type="checkbox"/> Any other ethnic group (please describe below)	<hr/>		<hr/>	
1	<input type="checkbox"/> White																		
2	<input type="checkbox"/> Black																		
3	<input type="checkbox"/> Indian																		
4	<input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani																		
5	<input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi																		
6	<input type="checkbox"/> Chinese																		
7	<input type="checkbox"/> Any other ethnic group (please describe below)																		
<hr/>																			
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## *Ethnic Group and the British Census*

The government proposed to include a question on ethnic group in the forthcoming census test (April 1989) and to study the results before deciding whether such a question could be included in the final plans for the 1991 Census.

They also invited further comments from members of the public and from organisations representing ethnic groups on whether they would answer the question. As a result of these further consultations, in particular, comments received from Black groups that more detail was required on the ethnic origins of Black people than had been proposed, it was eventually decided to use the question illustrated in Figure 9 in the census test.

**Figure 9. Question included in April 1989 Census Test**

<b>11 Ethnic Group</b>	White <input type="checkbox"/> 1
Please tick the appropriate box	Black-Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/> 2
	Black-African <input type="checkbox"/> 3
	Black-Other <input type="checkbox"/> 4
	<i>(please describe)</i>
	_____
	_____
If the person is descended from more than one ethnic or racial group, please tick the group to which the person considers he/she belongs, or tick box 9 and describe the person's ancestry in the space provided.	Indian <input type="checkbox"/> 5
	Pakistani <input type="checkbox"/> 6
	Bangladeshi <input type="checkbox"/> 7
	Chinese <input type="checkbox"/> 8
	Any other ethnic group <input type="checkbox"/> 9
	<i>(please describe)</i>
	_____
	_____

### **Methodology of the April 1989 Census Test**

The census test was carried out in six locations in England and Scotland and was a complete enumeration of all the households in the areas selected (90,000 households). The intention was to simulate a full census with a varied cross-section of the population.

One consideration for selecting the areas was the need to provide a sample which would adequately test the inclusion of a question on ethnic origin. An area in London was included

because it was known (from the 1981 Census data on the country of birth of the head of the household) that the population included a high proportion of ethnic minority groups. Similar criteria were used to select an area in Birmingham.

In addition to the census test itself, a post-enumeration survey was carried out, the main objective of which was to test the acceptability and reliability of the question on ethnic group. As the methods adopted in this survey were different from the approach in the field tests already described (although every effort was made to make the results comparable), it is worth describing the survey in detail (a fuller account is given in White (1990)).

The post-enumeration survey was a follow up survey in four of the test areas in which interviewers asked people who co-operated with the census test (census test forms having been delivered and collected by enumerators) whether they had any difficulties with or objections to the question on ethnic group and, more importantly, asked people who had not co-operated why they had not taken part. For those who did not take part in the test particular questions were asked about whether they had any problems with the question.

The sample for the post-enumeration survey was designed to supply for subsequent analysis sufficient numbers of households containing members of each of the main ethnic minority groups. There was also a need to sample from among households which did not co-operate in the census test, and from among those who co-operated but declined to answer the question on ethnic group or answered the question by using the "any other ethnic group – please describe" box.

The number of addresses selected for the survey which were found to have a household present or resident on the night of the census test was 2,322. Table 1 gives the number of households selected, and the number interviewed, from co-operating households, by broad ethnic groups, and from households which did not take part in the census test.



## *Ethnic Group and the British Census*

**Table 1. Response to the 1989 Post Enumeration Survey**

Sampled Population	Number of Eligible Addresses	Number of Households Interviewed	Percentage of Sample Interviewed
Households which took part in the census test			
Households containing:			
White persons only	297	283	95
a Black person	378	337	89
an Asian person	262	234	89
Households which declined to answer the ethnic group question or used "any other ethnic group - please describe"	530	454	86
Subtotal	1,467	1,308	89
Households which did not co-operate in the census test	855	581	68
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,322</b>	<b>1,889</b>	<b>81</b>

The overall response rate for the post-enumeration survey was 81 percent, consisting of 89 percent response among households which took part in the census test and 68 percent among those who did not take part.

### **Results of the Census Test**

Of the households recorded as present on the night of the census test, 60 percent returned a completed form. This was in line with expectations based on the results of other recent voluntary census tests which had not included a question on ethnic group.

Table 2 gives the response rates to the census test by ethnic group and the reasons why households did not take part in the test, as reported in the post-enumeration survey. (Note that

the overall response rate given, 58 percent, is slightly less than it would have been if all the test areas had been included in the post-enumeration survey).

**Table 2. Post Enumeration Survey Analysis of Response to the 1989 Census Test, by Ethnic Group (in percent)**

Ethnic Group (Interviewer's Assessment)					
Response to the Census Test	White	Black - (All Groups)	Asian (All Groups)	Other & Not Determined	Total
Took part —	63	37	34	42	58
Refused in principle — because of ethnic group question	-	1	NIL	1	-
Because of Community Charge	2	5	2	3	2
Other reason	4	2	2	3	4
Other reasons for not taking part —					
Does not remember the Census Test	11	17	18	24	13
Too busy/could not be bothered	9	23	9	11	10
Claimed to have filled in form but it was not collected	6	8	10	5	7
Language difficulties	-	NIL	8	1	1
Other reasons	5	7	18	11	7
<b>Base (all households unweighted) = 100 percent</b>	<b>965</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>1,889</b>

NIL = no response

- = less than 1/2 percent

Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding

Less than half of one percent of the sample gave the ethnic group question as a reason for not taking part in the census test. Although the response rates among some of the ethnic minority groups were low, with only 34 percent of Asian households taking part, the question on ethnic group was rarely given as a reason for not taking part in the census test and only a relatively small proportion of those who did not take part refused on principle for that or any other reason.

## *Ethnic Group and the British Census*

In the census test, census enumerators could not contact 17 percent of eligible households. It is therefore no surprise that in the survey 13 percent of informants reported that they did not remember that enumerators had called.

"Too busy" and "could not be bothered" were given as reasons for not taking part in the voluntary census test by 10 percent of all informants including 23 percent of Black informants.

Eight percent of Asian informants explained to the follow-up interviewers that the reason for not taking part was linked to difficulties with language. Either they could not communicate with the enumerator or the communication that they had was not sufficient for them to understand the purpose of the census test. Although translated explanatory leaflets and interpreters were available it seems likely that difficulties with language may sometimes have been assessed by enumerators as reluctance to co-operate in the voluntary test. OPCS used evidence from the test to develop ways of tackling the problem in 1991.

Informants were asked if they had any objections to answering any of the questions on the census test form. If they did not mention the question on ethnic group at that point, they were asked if they had any difficulty with, or objections to, answering it. Interviewers also noted any objections raised to the question on ethnic group while checking the answers which the form-filler had made on the form with the informant.



**Table 3. Proportion of Informants who objected to the Ethnic Group Question in the 1989 Census Test, by Ethnic Group (in percent)**

	Ethnic Group (Interviewer's Assessment)				
	White	Black	Asian	Other and Not Determined	Total
<b>ALL HOUSEHOLDS IN THE TEST AREAS</b>					
Had no objections to the ethnic group question	95	80	95	88	93
Objected to the ethnic group question	5	20	5	12	7
<b>Base = 100 percent (all informants - unweighted)</b>	<b>965</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>1,887</b>
<b>INFORMANTS WHO TOOK PART IN THE CENSUS TEST</b>					
Had no objections to the ethnic group question	95	81	93	94	94
Objected to the ethnic group question	5	19	7	6	6
<b>Base = 100 percent (all informants who took part in the test - unweighted)</b>	<b>557</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>1,298</b>
<b>INFORMANTS WHO DID NOT CO-OPERATE WITH THE CENSUS TEST</b>					
Had no objections to ethnic group question	94	79	96	84	92
Objected to the ethnic group question	6	21	4	16	8
<b>Base = 100 percent (all informants who did not co-operate in the test - unweighted)</b>	<b>408</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>43*</b>	<b>589</b>

\* The figures for some of the individual ethnic groups in this table are based on small samples and should be interpreted with caution as they are subject to substantial sampling variance. The group labelled "other and not determined" are a particularly small and heterogenous sample, consisting both of those of "other" and mixed ethnic origins as well as those for whom the interviewer did not feel able to make a classification.

## *Ethnic Group and the British Census*

As in all previous tests of a question on ethnic group, a proportion of informants voiced objections to the question, when prompted, but this had not necessarily prevented them from taking part in the census test or answering the question. As Table 3 shows, one in five Black informants and one in twenty White and Asian informants objected to the question. Overall, seven percent of all informants objected to the question. Table 3 shows clearly that among informants who did not co-operate with the census test, the proportion objecting to the question was about the same as among those who took part in the test.

Perhaps the most important measure of the success of the question on ethnic group is the quality of the answers which were obtained from those who took part in the census test. The post-enumeration survey was designed to enable office-based staff to assess the quality of the answers for each individual in the household.

The classification used was as follows:

1. Good.  
The ethnic group given in the test was a single code and the interviewer detected no problems.
2. Reasonable.  
Other answers which, although not coded 1, appear to be reasonable. Examples were Asians who ticked both boxes 4 and 5-7, or people who ticked more than one box, perhaps because they are of mixed origin, and used box 9 to describe their ethnic group. It was expected that in a full census these answers could be validly processed.
3. Ambiguous.  
Where the ethnic group given was unclear or inconsistent with the interviewer's observations but in the interview the informant did not acknowledge that a mistake was made. An example would be a White person (interviewer's assessment) who ticks the "other" box and describes themselves as "British" or "pink," etc. These answers, in a full Census, would be difficult to interpret.
4. Wrong.  
When the interviewer has pointed out inconsistencies, errors and multi-ticking and the informant has confirmed that a mistake was made. This could be caused by a clerical error.
5. Ethnic group not answered.  
Results are presented in Table 4. The ethnic group for one in 10 of all individuals was not given on the census test form. People in households where the form-filler was judged by interviewers to be in the White group were no exception. Black people had a higher proportion of omissions (13 percent) than average and people who lived in households where

interviewers felt that none of the categories could be applied had, not surprisingly, 16 percent omissions.

**Table 4. Quality of Answers to the Ethnic Group Question in 1989 Test. Ethnic Group (Interviewer's Assessment) (in percent)**

Quality of Answers to the Ethnic Group Question	White	Black (All Groups)	Asian (All Groups)	Other & Not Determined	Total
Good	89	84	76	73	87
Reasonable	1	1	13	8	2
Ambiguous	-	1	1	1	1
Wrong	-	-	1	1	-
Omitted	10	13	8	16	10
<b>Base (all persons, unweighted) = 100 percent</b>	<b>1,283</b>	<b>845</b>	<b>1,115</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>3,793</b>

- = less than 1/2 percent

Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding

Although individuals living in households where the informant was classified by interviewers as Asian were less likely than the rest of the sample to have a "good" answer (76 percent compared with 87 percent) they were most likely (13 percent) to have a "reasonable" answer instead. When census staff made an assessment of the correct ethnic group on the basis of the information given by the form-filler, then the overall accuracy for this group was the same as that obtained for all groups at 89 percent (including both good and reasonable answers).

If the "good" answers are added to the "reasonable" answers in an overall measure of accuracy we have:

White 90 percent accurate

Black 86 percent accurate

Asian 89 percent accurate

Other and not determined 82 percent accurate



## *Ethnic Group and the British Census*

### **The 1991 Census**

The government's decision was to include a question on ethnic group, similar to that tested in April 1989, in the 1991 Census (Her Majesty's Government 1990a, 1990b). The evidence of the final census test was that the presence of a question on ethnic group was not a significant cause of non-response in the test as less than one half of one percent of potential form-fillers declined to co-operate because of the question. Also, the accuracy of the answers given to the question was of a sufficiently high standard for inclusion in the census.

The evidence from the final test is placed in context in Tables 5 and 6 which compare some of the April 1989 results with other tests and field trials carried out between 1979 and 1986.

Comparisons between the various tests and field trials should be made with caution, as the characteristics of the areas and the samples varied between tests. However, a general indication of how public opposition to a question on ethnic group in the census has varied over the last decade is given in the figures presented in Table 5. For each ethnic grouping represented in each of the tests, this table shows what proportion of informants mentioned objections to the question. The populations for the table consist of persons who filled in a test form, and were then subsequently interviewed. This is the only basis on which comparisons can be made between all the tests. The ethnic groups surveyed varied from test to test. Results are available which correspond to the Black, Asian and White groups in the post-enumeration survey but not all of the groups were included in each test.

**Table 5. Proportion of Form-fillers Objecting to Ethnic Group Questions by Ethnic Group of Household Members (in percent)**

Ethnic Group of Household Members	Date of Each Test							
	1979 VB	1985 VIA	1985 VIB	1986 Jan VIIA	1986 Jan VIIB	1986 Oct VIIB	1986 Oct VIIC	1989
White	5	*	*	*	*	7	5	5
Black	32	*	*	18	35	36	30	19
Asian	32	4	3	*	*	4	11	7

\* = This ethnic group not included in test.

Table 5 shows that the proportion of Black informants in 1989 who objected to the question on ethnic group was, at 19 percent, close to the lowest level of objection recorded amongst Black informants since 1979. The question which was found in January 1986 to raise objections from slightly fewer Black people than the current question was not answered as accurately (see Table 6). The 1986 question, illustrated in Figure 5 included a Black British category which it had been thought explained its relative popularity with Black groups. There is no obvious explanation for why the 1989 question did not give rise to the same level of objections from Blacks as other questions tested since January 1986. It may be that the effort which had gone into consultation about the question and explaining the reasons for the census test itself to the public had borne fruit and that the general level of concern about a question on ethnic group had been much reduced. It may also be attributable to the fact that in recent years ethnic monitoring has become much more widespread. It is now accepted in local government, in public services generally and among the larger private employers. Familiarity with answering questions about ethnic group in other contexts (e.g., when applying for jobs and housing) will make it seem more natural and less objectionable to do it in a census.

**Table 6. Proportion of Individuals whose Ethnic Group Was Recorded Accurately by Ethnic Group of Household Members (in percent)**

Ethnic Group of Household Members	Date of Each Test							
	1979 VB	1985 VIA	1985 VIB	1986 Jan VIIA	1986 Jan VIIB	1986 Oct VIIB	1986 Oct VIIC	1989
White	84	*	*	*	*	95	93	90
Black	41	*	*	72	70	85	81	86
Asian	68	74	76	*	*	85	94	89

\* = This ethnic group not included in test.

The situation has clearly improved since 1979, both for Black and for Asian groups. The level of opposition among the White group seems to have been steady at about 5 percent.

Nevertheless, in 1989 one in five members of Black ethnic minorities, when pressed, voiced objections to the question even though only one percent of Black households refused to complete the census form because of the question. It was therefore essential at census time to arrange

## *Ethnic Group and the British Census*

adequate publicity to reassure members of ethnic minority groups and to explain the purpose of the question and how the data would be used.

Table 6 presents figures comparing the accuracy with which the question on ethnic group was completed across the various tests. The percentage rate of accuracy for 1989 is based on both "good" and "reasonable" answers, which was also the convention followed when results were published for the earlier tests. The question tested in 1989 produced the most accurate results for Black ethnic minority groups recorded since 1979. For Asians, only the 1986 design VIIC (see Figure 7) produced more accurate results. The results for Whites in 1989 are poor compared with those from the 1986 tests, but this is almost entirely due to the ten percent of White individuals for whom the question was not answered in 1989. There was a clear improvement, for all ethnic groups, in the level of accuracy measured between 1979 and 1989.

Although the accuracy of the answers given to the question on ethnic group was, in 1989, generally of a high standard when compared with earlier tests, an examination of returned forms showed that a common error was to tick more than one box. People from the Asian ethnic groups, for example, sometimes ticked both the Black-other box and a box for their correct Asian group. From comments made and from the pattern of multiple ticking it seems that, as with design VIIB in 1986, some members of Asian groups were confused by the existence or positioning of the box for Black-other with its instruction to "please describe." Nevertheless the question still performed better for the Asian groups than most of the questions tested since 1979.

The question which was included in the 1991 census is a compromise between obtaining the type and detail of information that users require, and devising a question which members of the public understand and will answer. It is likely, therefore, to attract criticism from those who think that it does not go sufficiently far, as well as from those who will continue to be wary of the purpose of such a question. In response to such criticisms the census offices can point out that the question was developed from empirical criteria and in close consultation with bodies such as the Commission for Racial Equality (which has recommended a similar question for ethnic monitoring purposes [Commission for Racial Equality 1988]), and organisations representing ethnic groups. In short: it works, it provides valuable information and it is acceptable to the public. If the question which has been included in the census is successful in 1991, there may be an opportunity to develop it further, if that is the wish of the government of the day.

### **Forms of Output**

The output from the ethnic group question for small geographical areas was thoroughly discussed with users in central and local government, the health service, academics and the Commission for Racial Equality. This process was intensified following concerns, expressed during the debate in Parliament on the census legislation, that there was a risk of identification of



individuals in small populations, particularly in areas with very small numbers in specific categories.

The outcome of this process was agreement that selected statistics must be released for Enumeration Districts (EDs), but not the fuller tables to be published for local government districts. EDs (the workload area covered by an enumerator) contain, on average, about 200 households or 500 people, though a few are much smaller (about two percent of the 115,000 districts contain less than 100 households). Users stated that they had a need to plan and monitor service provision and resource allocation for a wide range of area types, many of which are small, such as housing estates, neighbourhood renewal areas, and catchment areas for schools, libraries and antenatal clinics. These areas do not necessarily coincide with statutory boundaries. The users argued that only statistics at the enumeration district level would give them the flexibility required to allow the aggregation of statistics to correspond with such ad hoc areas.

Six tables on ethnic group are included in the small area statistics (SAS) for enumeration districts. They cover:

1. Sex and age
2. Type of household
3. Housing details, such as tenure and persons per room
4. Economic position
5. Migration
6. Country of birth

For illustration, the SAS tables on sex, age and housing are shown in Appendix A.

The tables are part of a set of some 86 tables in the SAS, which are supplied on magnetic tape or cartridge for IBM and ICL environment main frame computers. A software package to handle and analyze SAS has been developed by a public sector consortium, and this package is portable across a range of both main frame and micro computers. Apart from the magnetic media, A4 paper copies of SAS can be supplied on request, with a ceiling on the amount.

The SAS tables are drawn from a larger set for local authority (government) districts. This larger set, known as local base statistics (LBS), consists of about 20,000 counts (cells) in nearly 100 tables. The LBS tables are being published in a series of county reports, divided into two parts; one for questions fully processed and the second for those questions, such as occupation, industry, qualifications and relationship, included in the 10 percent sample. The reports are being published throughout 1992 and into early 1993.

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The SAS tables are abbreviated versions of the LBS tables. The two LBS tables which correspond to those shown in Appendix A are illustrated in Appendix B.

Specific examples of uses which will be made from the statistics in tables 6 and 46 of appendices A and B are given below. These examples are drawn from cases made by users, mainly in local authorities and health authorities, to back up their requests for statistics on ethnic groups.

1. Table 6 For applications for funding (from central government) under the Local Government Act 1966.

The Disabled Persons (Services Consultation and Representation) Act, 1986 requires that assessment of need be made in the language of the client. Ethnic group statistics will be used by local authorities to estimate the resources needed to meet this requirement.

For planning (and targeting) programmes. For example, in nursery and primary education, teaching English as a second language and community services such as antenatal classes for Asian women.

As a base for local projections by ethnic group.

2. Table 46 To assess that rehousing schemes are being made readily available to all ethnic groups.

To plan housing schemes under several local authority/central government initiatives directed at inner cities.

To ensure that the allocation of housing improvement grants is on an equitable basis.

As well as tables in local reports, there will be a national report on "Ethnic group and country of birth," planned to be published in April 1993. The tables in this report cover the whole range of census topics, including derived variables such as social class, socio-economic group and family types. Most statistical output uses 10 ethnic groups (the nine categories in the question plus "Other - please specify" divided into "Asian" and "Other").

There has been much interest in the coding frame for the "write-in" answers, for both "Black - Other - please describe" and "Any other ethnic group - please describe." Part of this interest has stemmed from other data collectors, who want to adopt the 1991 Census question in order to use statistics from the census as denominators for rates. Examples include health service statistics and figures on recruitment in specific occupations. Part of the interest also arose

because certain Irish groups encouraged persons of Irish origin to tick the "Any other group" box and to write in "Irish." In addition, there is some interest in the composition of this residual group, particularly for those describing themselves as being descended from more than one ethnic or racial group (given the note in the question itself). Write-in answers were coded to one of 28 categories, unless the descriptions were the same (or had the same meaning) as one of the categories in the question itself. The coding frame was based on the 1989 census test though as new descriptions were encountered during "live" coding of the census itself, these were incorporated into the coding frame. The 28 categories are:

1. Black - Other: non-mixed origin

British/Caribbean Island, West Indies or Guyana/North Africa, Arab or Iranian/Other African Countries/East African Asian or Indo-Caribbean/India Sub-Continent/Other Asian/other answers.

2. Black - Other: mixed origin

Black-White/Asian-White/Other mixed.

3. Other ethnic group: non-mixed origin

British - ethnic minority indicated/British - no ethnic minority indicated/Caribbean Island, West Indies or Guyana/North Africa, Arab or Iranian/Other African Countries/East African Asian or Indo-Caribbean/Indian Sub-Continent/Other Asian/Irish/Greek (including Greek Cypriot)/Turkish (including Turkish Cypriot)/Other European/other answers.

4. Black-White/Asian-White/Mixed White/Other mixed

For the main tables, some of these 28 categories are being re-allocated to one of the main groups – for example, Irish, Greek, Turkish, Other European and mixed White are re-allocated to "White." The Ethnic Group and Country of Birth Volume will include a table showing the resident counts for each category in the full list for each local authority district.

The ethnic group dimension also appears in other national topic reports – for example, the volume on communal establishments includes a table on type of establishment by status in establishment by age of person for broad ethnic groups. A similar table will be in the ethnic group and country of birth volumes which excludes age but gives the full 10 ethnic groups.

In addition to tables in SAS and published reports, customers will also be able to commission (and pay for) ad hoc requests. Such requests may take the form of extensions of published tables to other geographies, or extensions of distributions in published tables or completely new tables specified by the customer. This facility is likely to continue throughout the 1990s.

The 10 ethnic group classification is also included in the two samples of non-identifiable records – a 1 percent sample of households and associated persons for standard regions and a 2 percent



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sample of persons in households and communal establishments for large local authority districts (minimum resident population of about 120,000). These samples, which will be available in early 1993 via the Economic and Social Research Council, will allow users to produce analyses by ethnic group, additional to tables in the published reports or special requests, albeit at a fairly high geographic level.

### **Note**

1. Much of the earlier part of this paper is based on the article "Ethnic Group and the British Census: the Search for a Question" by K. Sillitoe and P. H. White in *J.R.Statist. Soc. A* (1992) 155, Part 2 (copyright held by JRSS).

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**Appendices**

Appendix A: Small Area Statistics Tables

Appendix B: Local Base Statistics Tables

## Appendix A

### A. Small Area Statistics Tables

6 All Residents													
	TOTAL PERSONS	Ethnic Group									Persons born in Ireland		
		White	Black Caribbean	Black African	Black Other	Indian	Pakistani	Bangladeshi	Chinese	Other Groups			
										Asian			Other
TOTAL PERSONS													
Males													
Females													
Age:													
0-4													
5-15													
16-29													
30-pens. age													
Pens. age +													
With limiting long term illness													

46 Households with Residents; Residents in Households							
	TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS	Ethnic Group of Resident Household Head				Resident household head born in NCW	Resident household head born in Ireland
		White	Black Groups	Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi	Chinese and other Groups		
TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS							
Over 1 and up to 1.5 persons per room							
Over 1.5 persons per room							
Owner occupied							
Private rented							
Housing Association							
Renting from LA / New Town							
Central heating in no rooms							
No car							
TOTAL RESIDENTS IN HOUSEHOLDS with:							
Over 1 and up to 1.5 persons per room							
Over 1.5 persons per room							

# Appendix B

## B. Local Base Statistics Tables - Continued

6 All Residents													
Age	TOTAL PERSONS	Ethnic Group								Persons born in Ireland			
		White	Black Caribbean	Black African	Black Other	Indian	Pakistani	Bangladeshi	Chinese			Other Groups	
												Asian	Other
TOTAL PERSONS													
MALES	TOTAL												
	0-4												
	5-9												
	10-14												
	15												
	16-17												
	18-19												
	20-24												
	25-29												
	30-34												
	35-39												
	40-44												
	45-49												
	50-54												
	55-59												
	60-64												
	65-69												
	70-74												
	75-79												
	80-84												
	85+												
FEMALES	TOTAL												
	0-4												
	5-9												
	10-14												
	15												
	16-17												
	18-19												
	20-24												
	25-29												
	30-34												
	35-39												
	40-44												
	45-49												
	50-54												
	55-59												
	60-64												
	65-69												
	70-74												
	75-79												
	80-84												
	85+												
Born in UK													
With limiting long term illness													



## Ethnic Group and the British Census

### B. Local Base Statistics Tables - Concluded

46 Households with Residents; Residents in Households												
	TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS	Ethnic Group of Resident Household Head									Resident household head born in NCW	Resident household head born in Ireland
		White	Black Caribbean	Black African	Black Other	Indian	Pakistani	Bangladeshi	Chinese	Other Groups		
										Asian    Other		
TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS												
Over 1 and up to 1.5 persons per room												
Over 1.5 persons per room												
Owner occupied - owned outright												
- buying												
Private rented												
Housing Association												
Renting from LA / New Town												
Bath/shower and/or inside WC shared or lacking												
Central heating in no rooms												
Non-self-contained accommodation												
No car												
Containing resident(s) with limiting long term illness												
TOTAL RESIDENTS IN HOUSEHOLDS with:												
Over 1 and up to 1.5 persons per room												
Over 1.5 persons per room												
Bath/shower and/or inside WC shared or lacking												
Central heating in no rooms												
Non-self-contained accommodation												
No car												

# *Australia's Experience With Census Questions on Ethnicity*

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## **Introduction**

With increased public debate during the 1970s and 1980s about the level, composition and impact of immigration and the future directions of multiculturalism in Australia, demands have increased for census statistics that provide better measures of ethnicity than do questions on, for example, birthplace, birthplace of parents and religion. Questions on birthplace and religion have been asked in all Australian population censuses since 1911 while questions on birthplace of parents have been asked in censuses since 1971. As well, questions on race (notwithstanding many problems acknowledged by the Australian Statisticians of the time) were asked in early censuses and questions on Aboriginal origin have been asked in censuses since 1971.

During the development of the 1981 Census, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) received a number of requests for the inclusion of an ethnicity topic. While recognising the need for the data, the ABS was unable to develop a satisfactory question in time for the 1981 Census. The government subsequently accepted an ABS recommendation that this topic should not be included in the 1981 Census but the Treasurer (as Minister responsible for the ABS) and the ABS gave an undertaking that a committee of experts would be established to investigate possible measures of ethnicity for the 1986 Census.

Subsequent to this was the acceptance by the government of the following recommendation contained in the report of the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs on the evaluation of postarrival programs and services, that "future censuses should include a question on ethnic origin as well as questions on birthplace of parents and language usage".

In light of this, the Australian Statistician appointed the 1986 Population Census Ethnicity Committee in late 1982 to advise him on possible census questions relating to the ethnic origin of the population. The ABS assisted the committee in its investigations including conducting field tests of possible questions, the results of which were crucial to its findings. The committee reported its findings to the Statistician in April 1984.<sup>1</sup>

For the first time, the 1986 Census included a question on people's ancestry and this paper reports on that experience, drawing heavily on the committee's report. The question was not included in the recent 1991 Census. Both censuses included questions on birthplace, parents' birthplace, Aboriginal origin, language spoken at home and religion (optional). Australia's

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experience with asking questions on Aboriginal origin is also reported on at the end of this paper.

During the development of the content of the 1991 Census, the ABS put the view to users that further time is required by the ABS and users to assess the reliability and usefulness of the ancestry data before an assessment can be made on the inclusion of the question in future censuses. Furthermore, given the government's express wish to reduce the cost of the census and that other information relevant to the determination of ethnicity (e.g., birthplace, birthplace of parents and language used) were proposed for collection in the 1991 Census, the cost of including a question on ethnic origin again in 1991 was not justified.

Overall, there was minimal adverse reaction to the above ABS view which was accepted by the government. Major users in government agencies were clearly of the view that the "traditional" questions on ethnicity were more important than a repeat of the ancestry question at their expense. Researchers were also generally of the view that the inclusion of the ancestry question every five years could not be justified. Some reluctance to accept the ABS view was shown by ethnic community groups and most of these wanted the ABS to pursue the development of a self-identification question on ethnic origin.

### **Ethnicity Concepts and Measurement Techniques**

In attempting to develop techniques for the measurement of a person's ethnicity the 1986 Population Census Ethnicity Committee considered international experience. From the outset it was obvious that there was neither a universally accepted concept nor measurement technique associated with the topic. Indeed, views as to the very meaning of the word "ethnicity" vary widely, both between countries and between different bodies within the same country.

Colloquial usage in Australia often restricts the term "ethnic" to people of other than Anglo-Celtic origin and particularly to migrants from non-English-speaking countries. This usage ignores the fact that the term is derived from the Greek word *ethnos*, meaning "nation" or "people". Accordingly, all persons living in Australia are "ethnic" whether they are Aboriginals or trace their roots to the British Isles, continental Europe, Asia, Africa, the Pacific nations or the Americas or regard themselves simply as Australians. The colloquial usage of the term ethnic causes problems in asking a census question on ethnic origin as a large proportion of the population does not consider such a question to be addressed to them.

The committee considered that perhaps the most enlightening attempt to define an ethnic group is that contained in a United Kingdom Law Lords statement.<sup>2</sup> The Law Lords recognized that the concept should not be tied to dictionary or theoretical meanings which often provide merely a historical starting point for an evolving meaning in daily usage. They identified a number of factors involved, not all of which had to be present in the case of each ethnic group. The key



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factor, however, was seen to be the fact that the group regarded itself – and was regarded by others – as a distinct community by virtue of certain characteristics. Among the distinguishing characteristics that may be involved were cited:

1. a long shared history, the memory of which is kept alive;
2. a cultural tradition, including family and social customs, sometimes religiously based;
3. a common geographical origin;
4. a common language (but not necessarily limited to that group);
5. a common literature (written or oral);
6. a common religion;
7. being a minority (often with a sense of being oppressed);
8. being racially conspicuous.

Such a group may be coterminous with a nation, cover more than one nation-state or be a subgroup of one or a number of nation-states or countries.

Within this general perspective of a multidimensional concept there is an important choice between two broad subconcepts. This choice is between a concept which relies on a self-perceived group identification approach or a concept which is more historically determined.

A self-perceived group identification approach would be concerned with establishing the ethnic group or groups with which people identify. In doing so, this approach would focus on people's current perceptions irrespective of origins.

By contrast, a more historical approach would seek to identify the ancestry/origin of the respondent. By definition, this concept addresses the past rather than the present and in theory should give a consistent answer for all.

The distinction between the approaches is less clear than suggested. Whilst an approach based on ancestry presumes an objective basis, respondent reporting is likely to be less than totally so and the ethnic allegiance or origin nominated by a respondent could be dependant on his/her views and values at the particular time. In addition, because of a lack of clearly specified rules which determine ethnic group membership or ancestry, the ethnicity which persons ascribe to themselves may differ from that which would be ascribed by the community.

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Reporting of a person's ethnicity by someone other than the individual could confuse both conceptual approaches but more particularly that which relies on self perception. This point is important given that in Australia it is estimated that between 30 to 50 percent of census forms are completed by a single person in the household on behalf of all household members. The same problems would, of course, exist to varying degrees for all census questions which have a subjective element.

### **The Nature of the Data Being Sought on Ethnicity**

The development of topics for the 1986 Census was centred around submissions from users and the public on topics for inclusion in or exclusion from the census. All submissions for data to be collected on the ethnic composition of the population were considered by the committee.

Submissions from users were not always specific as to the concepts they advocated but this could sometimes be deduced from their comments. The weight of submissions seemed to be behind a self-perceived group identification concept rather than the more historical ancestry/origin approach. About two-thirds of submissions favoured the former approach.

Submissions generally requested that:

1. data be collected every five years, given changes which take place in the patterns of immigration and attitudes among immigrants;
2. the number of ethnic groups identified separately be the maximum possible so as to identify small minority groups;
3. information about ethnicity be cross-classified extensively with other demographic, social and economic data collected in the census; and
4. data be available for small geographic areas, e.g., census collection districts and local government areas.

### **The Purposes for Which the Information is Required**

In discussing the purposes for which the information is required, the committee made the distinction between the reason that a specific question on ethnicity was required and the uses for the information that such a question would yield.

The reason advanced by virtually all users as to why a specific question is required is that data which can be derived from the traditional surrogate variables (i.e. birthplace, parents' birthplace, religion and language used at home) do not describe the ethnic groups with sufficient precision.

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Users pointed to the following as examples of areas where the real situation is obscured by the traditionally collected data:

1. Third, fourth and other generations of migrants to Australia are not identified; i.e. they appear as Australian because the census questions "only go back as far as birthplace of parents". Older established groups (such as German, Scottish, Irish) have far more persons in these categories than they do in the first and second generations.
2. A number of distinct ethnic groups (e.g., Serbs, Croats) are all shown as being "Yugoslav" (their country of birth or their parents).
3. British and European persons born in colonies or former colonies of the respective countries appear as being ethnically of that birthplace group; e.g., Birthplace India includes many British persons; Birthplace Indonesia includes many Dutch.
4. Many persons of Eastern European ethnic extraction appear as ethnic Germans as they were born in Germany to displaced second World War refugee parents.

The committee accepted the validity of these arguments. The question which remained, however, was to consider what purposes would be served by the collection of statistics in the census which would more accurately reflect the situation.

Users' explanations of the purposes for which they intended to use information about ethnicity fell into two broad groups – the description of Australia's population composition (in ethnicity terms) and the development, planning and assessment of policies and service-delivery mechanisms in both government and private sectors. Users' views are outlined below.

Clearly, the Census of Population and Housing is viewed by many persons and organisations as being one of the most, if not the most, important source of reliable statistics about the key elements of Australian society. Given the diversity in the ethnic composition of the population and the upsurge of interest in the implications of a multicultural society and if ethnic groups do have different customs, values, etc., which are maintained through successive generations, it is natural that there is pressure for the census to collect data which some users believe more accurately reflect the ethnic composition of the population than do the present data. However, user submissions expressing this view often had another flavour. This was that the census should be sufficiently sensitive and flexible so as to allow people to report "what they really are" rather than forcing them to report their "ethnicity" through questions which do not reflect their own opinions.

The committee accepted the view that the description of society is a most important function of the census. However, it found it somewhat difficult to judge, in objective terms, the size and



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significance of any problems occasioned by the reliance on surrogate data alone for descriptive purposes. It was similarly difficult to judge the precise extent to which these problems may be eliminated by a specific question on ethnicity.

Submissions to the committee frequently claimed that a direct measure of ethnicity was anything from useful through to essential in the formulation of policy and the planning and actual delivery of services directed at ethnic groups. The areas mentioned included:

1. education — language teaching, multicultural curricula development, enrolment and participation comparisons;
2. health — sensitisation of staff to the needs of ethnic groups, nurse education curricula, interpreting services;
3. welfare — aged persons services, handicapped persons services, child care facilities, income security studies, allocation of grants/subsidies;
4. politics — identification of groups whose views are an important force, electoral procedures;
5. ethnic media/language policy — development of national language policy, appropriate allocations of community language media resources;
6. anti-discrimination/equal opportunity — ensuring equal opportunities for access to the privileges and benefits of Australian society.

With increasing interest in the allocation of resources and funds, claims about the size of some ethnic groups have been regarded as exaggerated. The committee felt, therefore, that it would be advantageous to all parties that there be a set of common, reliable estimates.

The extent to which government agencies' policy planning, service delivery, fund allocation, etc., would be improved by access to data from a direct self-perception based question on ethnicity over and above questions on surrogate topics was not easy to assess. One school of thought was that services would be better planned on the basis of more objective data from topics such as birthplace and on the basis of data on language use and proficiency in English. Also, the data would be relatable to other data (such as from administrative records). The other view expressed by many users is that such statistics do not identify ethnic groups with sufficient precision and that precision is required if services are to be adequately tailored to community needs which are based on ethnicity rather than other characteristics.

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An overall assessment of users' requirements was found to be difficult. The committee accepted that the census provides the major consolidated statistical description of Australian society and that, as such, it should be as responsive as possible to the community views about its content. Further, there was no doubt that a significant demand existed for the inclusion of a specific question on ethnicity in the 1986 Census. This demand came from a variety of sectors and was occasioned by a diverse range of interests. The demand was principally for the inclusion of a question using a self-perceived group affiliation approach.

The committee acknowledged both the reality of the demand and the fact that this demand was unlikely to be satisfied by the inclusion only of ethnicity surrogates in the 1986 Census. There were, however, some unresolved issues about the extent to which policy planning and service delivery would be improved by access to an adequate direct measure of ethnicity. The committee accepted, nevertheless, that the inclusion of such a question in the 1986 Census might provide a different and arguably more relevant profile of the community. Given this and the expressed demand from persons and organisations for data for the former purposes, the committee concluded that, providing a question can be developed which yields valid and reliable statistical data, the 1986 Census should include a direct question on a person's ethnicity.

In addition, the committee saw much value in some of the surrogate variables. In this context, therefore, the committee particularly supported the inclusion of questions on birthplace of individual, birthplace of parents, religion and language usage. In view of its importance as an objective measure in planning the delivery of services and as an indicator of active ethnicity, the committee recommended that the language usage question should be based on language used at home. The committee also supported the continued inclusion of a separate question on Aboriginal origin.

### *Development and Testing of Direct Ethnicity Questions for the Census*

#### **Overall Summary of Pilot Testing**

In total, eight different ethnicity questions were included in five field tests conducted for the committee by the ABS on samples of the population. The alternative questions tested were as follows:

1. Does each person consider himself or herself to have an ethnic origin? (If so, ethnic origin was requested.)
2. What is each person's ancestry? e.g., English, Greek, Lebanese, Vietnamese, Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander.

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3. What is each person's ancestry? For example, Greek, English, Indian, Armenian, Aboriginal, Chinese, etc.
4. With which Australian ethnic group(s) does each person identify?
5. Australia's population is made up of people of many ethnic/cultural communities or groups. To which such community or group does each person consider he/she belongs?
6. Australia's population is made up of people of many national/cultural backgrounds. What is the national/cultural background of each person?
7. The Australian population is made up of many ethnic communities or groups. With which community or group does each person identify?

More details on these questions and the results of the tests are available in the committee's report.<sup>3</sup> The results are summarized below against each of four criteria applied by the ABS in selecting appropriate questions for topics considered for inclusion in the census.

1. Any question must stand on its own with minimal assistance by the census collector and with only limited support from publicity.

One broad problem experienced during pilot testing was a lack of understanding among some respondents of terminology used in the ethnicity questions. This problem was apparent from the very first test in January 1983. Subsequent tests experimented with different concepts, different styles of questions and different wordings in attempts to reduce the level of confusion that was apparent amongst respondents. Words and terms such as "ethnic", "ethnic group", "ethnic origin", "belong" and "identify" were all subject to a degree of misunderstanding on the part of respondents or, in some cases, were not understood at all.

The committee came to the general conclusion that generally fewer response problems were experienced with the two questions which used an historical approach than with the questions which used the self-perceived group identification concept — the former type of question tends to avoid the use of the particular problematical words and terms (but produces data of a different nature).

One test incorporated a relatively small scale publicity campaign. The evaluation of this tended to confirm the view formed by the ABS following the 1981 Census. This is that it is difficult in publicity campaigns to influence responses to individual questions but that publicity can help to create a generally more favourably atmosphere for the census enumeration.



2. Any question must have widespread acceptance and must not jeopardize the level or quality of response to other questions on the form.

There was some adverse reaction to the ethnicity questions. However, this certainly was not consistent. Antagonism on the part of respondents to the question, and in particular to the word "ethnic", was clearly in evidence in some tests. One test used the word "ancestry" and two others used a lead-in statement to help explain the question. In these tests there was little or no adverse reaction or sensitivity to the questions used. It may be that the exclusion of the word "ethnic", or the use of a lead-in statement helped minimize any adverse reaction. Alternatively, it is certainly within the bounds of possibility that the adverse reactions experienced in the other tests were a function of the specific geographic areas used for those tests.

The committee's considered assessment was that an appropriately worded ethnicity question would not generate adverse reaction sufficient to jeopardize responses to other questions on the census form. A question which incorporates the word "ethnic" might be more sensitive than a question without this word. After considering the pilot test results, however, the committee believed that a satisfactory self-perceived group identification based question cannot be formulated without this adjective.

3. Any question must yield statistical data which are additional to those that could be derived from other questions included on the form.

The pilot test evaluations included analyses of the extent to which data from the direct ethnicity questions differ from those which could be derived from the traditional ethnicity surrogate questions. The general pattern evident was that the direct questions do yield data which are different from those derived from other questions – even different from those from a language usage question which is often cited as being a satisfactory surrogate. Having made this broad statement, however, there were some points noted by the committee.

First, the broad patterns in the data from the basic ancestry question tested were reasonably comparable with some estimates of the composition of the population by ethnic origin derived from the existing surrogate variables by a prominent demographer noted for his work in this field (Price 1988). Given this, a straight ancestry question may add little information at highly aggregated levels, although this is less a case for small areas and for some groups. Data from a self-identification question, however, are significantly different from those which could be derived from surrogates.

Second, the degree to which the direct questions provide extra data does vary. Responses to direct ethnicity questions provided additional data for some groups (particularly for groups from parts of the world that are heterogeneous in terms of language, culture and religion) but not to the same extent for others. It is important to recognize, too, that additional information is not

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always forthcoming for the groups for which it might be expected (for example, significant proportions of people born in Yugoslavia reported "Yugoslavia" as their ethnic group rather than identifying a more specific Yugoslav ethnic group). Also, the use of the word ethnic results in high non-response amongst those who feel themselves to be of "Australian" or "English" origin.

Third, and importantly, any question which incorporates a self-perception dimension is, by definition, likely to generate statistics which are different from those which can be derived from other variables, none of which are of a self-perception nature. For example, there was significant reporting of "Australian" ethnicity by persons who on all other counts would not be classified as Australian; the reverse is also true, i.e. an important proportion of the population who would, on the basis of surrogates, be classified as "Australian" reported identification with some other ethnic group.

4. Any question must produce statistics which have an acceptable level of validity and reliability.

One of the major purposes of each of the pilot tests was to assess the likely quality of the statistics which would result from the ethnicity question(s) under evaluation. Reports of the individual tests analysed such key factors as the level of non-response, the incidence of responses of "none", the patterns in the resultant data and qualitative indicators from follow-up interviews conducted as part of each test.

The committee believed that the pilot tests showed that there are certain features of questions which tend to improve the level and quality of responses. These features are:

1. Any ethnicity question should be "open-ended", i.e. respondents should be invited to write in their answer, rather than select one "tick box" from a list of predetermined response options. Pilot testing has clearly indicated that when there is confusion in the minds of respondents bias can be introduced with the latter approach from both the order of options and inclusions/exclusions.
2. Examples which are included alongside a question to help overcome problems of understanding should be few in number and they should be very carefully selected with a view to minimizing any possible effect they might have on responses.
3. Any self-perception question should, ideally, not include an instruction which indicates that "none" is an acceptable response – to include such an instruction could lead people, who would otherwise have responded differently, to the response "none". However, testing has shown that without such an instruction there is an unacceptably high rate of non-response to a self-identification type question (greater than 30 percent), whereas with an instruction relating to "none" two thirds of the population report "none"; in the latter case this portion

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of the population includes many persons who failed to understand the question. If an ancestry type approach were adopted, "none" would not be an acceptable response.

4. Any self-perception question should incorporate a lead-in statement to put the question in context. The committee believed that there are likely to be favourable effects in terms of increasing the community's general acceptance of such a question. An ancestry type question, however, should not need such a statement.
5. Any question which uses a self-perception approach should incorporate the word "ethnic". Whilst there are some problems with differential interpretation of this word, the committee believes that some adjective is necessary with words like "group" or "community" and that the word "ethnic" is to be preferred.

Notwithstanding the above, there were problems with all the questions tested and such problems were more severe in the case of the self-perception type questions. Such questions consistently experienced high to very high non-response rates with some bias evident in non-response. A further major problem was the significant variation in the way in which the population generally interpreted and answered the questions. This must be expected the very concept of "ethnicity" is of a multi dimensional, sociological nature – almost by definition it must mean different things to different people.

The committee's view was that these problems are significant enough to cause major aberrations in the resultant data. Clearly, there was no one particular question among those tested that could realistically be viewed as providing a completely or wholly valid and reliable statistical measure of "ethnicity". Indeed, the fact that, to a greater or lesser extent, the same problems existed for every ethnicity question tested must be viewed as indicating that the root of the problem lies with the concept itself rather than with any particular question. The task was to find a question which met acceptable limits for the four criteria.

The following summarizes the two types of questions tested according to the assessment criteria:

Criteria	Ancestry approach	Self perception approach
Does approach stand alone, etc.?	Yes	Not completely
Does self-perception approach have widespread acceptance?	Yes	Yes, perhaps less than ancestry approach



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Criteria	Ancestry approach	Self perception approach
Does approach yield additional data?	Yes, but less than-self perception approach	Yes
Does approach yield valid and reliable statistics?	Yes, although there are problems in the data of which users should be warned	No

Of the questions tested, the committee's view was that the ancestry question is to be preferred and that up to six or seven carefully selected examples should be included.

The committee concluded that the main problem with a self-identification question is that it would not produce valid or reliable statistics on the groups of people that identify with a number of different ethnic groups. Because the question confused many people and consequently increased non-response, there would be a significant undercount of the number of people identifying with more than one ethnic group. Because the rates of undercount would differ for different groups to an unknown extent, the data would be misleading to users.

### **1986 Census Question on Ancestry**

The committee's report was considered by the Statistician when preparing his recommendations to the government on the content of the 1986 Census. Of concern to the Statistician was that the pilot tests indicated that the ancestry question is not without problems: it is very likely to have a non-response rate higher than most other questions recommended for inclusion on the 1986 Census form; and it worries some respondents who do not know their ancestry, are of mixed ancestry or are unable to determine how far back to go in determining their ancestry.

Nevertheless, in view of the interest in ethnicity data, the ABS recommended to the government the inclusion of an ancestry question in the 1986 Census. This was on the basis that the data produced from the question would be subject to a full analyses of its adequacy and reliability to determine the suitability of including a similar question in future censuses. The question included was:

What is each person's ancestry? Ancestry .....

For example: Greek, English, Indian, Armenian, Aboriginal, Chinese, etc.

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In an attempt to overcome some of the problems evident in the tests of the question, the information booklet on the 1986 Census sent to each household along with the form contained the following definition and guidelines for respondents:

"Ancestry" means the ethnic or national group from which you are descended. It is quite acceptable to base your answer on your grandparents' ancestry. Persons of mixed ancestry who do not identify with a single group should answer with their multiple ancestry. Persons who consider their ancestry to be Australian may answer "Australian".

Effectively, the instructions relating to mixed ancestry and Australian ancestry allowed for some element of self-perceived group identification.

A total of 94 specific ancestry groups were coded for each of the first two responses. Other groups not on the list were coded to an "other" category. Persons who answered "mixed" or "not known" were also coded to separate categories, as were those whose ancestries were inadequately described. Non-respondents were coded to a "not stated" category.

### **Ancestry Data Quality**

An assessment of the quality of the 1986 Census ancestry data has been undertaken and is reported in an ABS Information Paper.<sup>4</sup> The paper examines the level and significance of non-response, nonspecific responses and multiple responses to the ancestry question and consistency between people's ancestry response and their answers to other related questions in the census. Of course, the results of the pilot tests conducted before the census are an important source of information on data quality.

### **Main Findings**

1986 Census statistics for most ancestry groups are considered to be reasonably accurate. Most people appeared to have understood the question and responded to the best of their knowledge about their ancestry. However, there appears to have been significant understatement for Irish, Scottish, Welsh, German and Scandinavia ancestries (these groups being significant sources of Australia's early migrants). Many of these people would have stated Australia or did not answer the question.

The ancestry question had a non-response rate of seven per cent. Non-response was more likely among the Australian-born population than the overseas-born population. The overseas-born population had a non-response rate of less than two per cent. Data on the birthplace and parents' birthplace of non-respondents suggested that the majority were likely to have been at least third generation Australian.

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Persons stating "mixed" or "not known" or were "inadequately described" made up less than one per cent of the population.

People's answers to the ancestry question were generally consistent with their answers to the questions on birthplace, parents' birthplace, language and Aboriginal origin. Birthplace was a reasonable measure of the ancestry of recent migrant groups, particularly those from countries with an ethnically homogenous population. For groups which have been in Australia for more than two generations the ancestry question is not always successful in eliciting their ethnic origins, most likely because they might be uncertain about their ancestry or they felt that they have a legitimate claim to Australian ancestry.

One in eight people stated multiple ancestries. Many people of multiple ancestries might have simplified their responses or identified with a single group. This might be expected considering that instructions in the guide to the householders had allowed people of mixed ancestry to identify with a single group. It is not known, however, how many people actually read the instructions or were influenced by them to answer with a single ancestry. The multiple response rate was highest for children and declined with increasing age. It was higher for women than for men in all adult age groups.

### **Australian Ancestry**

The three main reasons given by persons responding with Australian ancestry in the precensus test of the ancestry question were that:

1. they had a long family history in Australia (of at least three generations) and felt this was sufficient grounds for claiming Australian ancestry;
2. a feeling of "being Australian" among some adult persons with overseas-born parents; and
3. a feeling among a small proportion of overseas-born persons that their children born in Australia were Australian.

The guidelines to householders completing census forms did not specify what was meant by Australian ancestry. It was, therefore, left to people to consider whether their ancestry was "Australian" largely on their own criteria. Although the guidelines stated that it was acceptable for people to base their ancestry on their grandparents' ancestry, it was not required that they did so. Thus, people could have responded with Australian ancestry for any reason including the three mentioned above.

The strict meaning of ancestry would imply that Australian ancestry could not be a valid response for the overseas-born population or their children.



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One in five people stated Australian ancestry, either as a first or single response (20.3 percent) or second response (1.5 percent). Almost all these people were born in Australia and 85 percent had parents who were both born in Australia. The "Australian" response was highest for children less than five years old and lowest for the elderly population.

The birthplace and parents' birthplace of persons stating Australian ancestry suggest that in most cases Australian ancestry is a valid response within the guidelines given because the respondents were likely to have ancestors who were born in Australia. The proportion of "Australian" ancestry responses which would be considered invalid because the persons were overseas-born or had overseas-born parents was very small and unlikely to affect the overall reliability of the data.

In an analysis of the ancestry of parents and children it was observed that children were more likely to have Australian ancestry when the parents were of different or multiple ancestries than when the parents were of the same single ancestry. This suggests that Australian ancestry is also perceived as "blending" of different ancestries and as a single (neutral) group with which persons of mixed origins could identify.

### **Census Outputs With Ancestry Data**

The extent to which ancestry data should appear in census outputs as compared with other ethnicity variables (such as birthplace and birthplace of parents) and whether it should "stand alone" or always be related to other ethnicity variables was considered by the committee and the ABS.

On the one hand, the reason for collecting ancestry statistics is that they are considered to be better than only the surrogate statistics. This suggests that tables with ancestry as a variable for identifying ethnic groups should take prominence. On the other hand, it might be as important to produce more tables with birthplace as a variable because of the greater reliability of this to other data sources and its greater reliability. The ABS was of the opinion that it was not cost effective to duplicate all tables using both birthplace and ancestry and, therefore, a balance was set with emphasis on the birthplace variable.

Ancestry statistics were released in the form of cross-classified tables on microfiche and magnetic tape and in publications such as *Australia in Profile* (which summarizes the main results of the census) and *Cross-Classified Characteristics* (of state populations).

Because of the longer time needed to validate the ancestry statistics in the absence of previous data and doubts about the priority of ancestry statistics at small area level, it was decided not to include ancestry statistics in the standard small area profiles released progressively as processing of forms was completed. As it turned out, there has been little demand for ancestry

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statistics at small area level and their absence from the many standard products containing small area profiles received very little criticism from users, although users requiring such statistics were able to get them as separate outputs.

Perhaps the most important form of output was a series of detailed tables on magnetic tape with ancestry cross-classified with other ethnicity topics and by demographic variables. These detailed tables have been the main source of data for research into the ethnic composition of Australia.

### **Uses Made of Ancestry Data**

Probably the most common use made of the ancestry statistics has been for research into the size and characteristics of various ethnic groups which have in the past not been able to be adequately identified in the census from the surrogate questions (e.g., New Zealand Maoris, Chinese). Research into language retention by various community groups has also been done. These research studies have been done by academics and government agencies with an interest in immigration and multicultural issues. The outputs used for those studies would usually be the detailed tables produced on electronic media and microfiche.

The federal Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs disseminated statistics on the size and demographic characteristics of various birthplace groups. Information on ancestry was included in these "community profiles" to shed light on various ethnic groups associated with particular birthplaces. The Department also uses the statistics in briefings prepared for their Minister having consultations with the many and various community groups in Australia. For these consultations and other purposes the ancestry statistics, often cross-classified with birthplace or language to more precisely define groups, have been useful for establishing the size of various community groups making claims to the government.

It is most unlikely that many, if any, decisions have been made by governments on matters such as grants, services and airtime on ethnic radio using ancestry statistics.

### **Aboriginal Origin**

Data about Australia's Aboriginal population have been collected in every national census since 1911. However, before the 1971 Census all persons were asked to state their race (e.g., European, Aboriginal, Chinese) and particulars on full-blood Aboriginals were not included in census results in keeping with the Australian constitution of the time. Since the repeal of the relevant section in 1967, ABS has attempted to collect data on the Aboriginal population which are as comprehensive as the data gathered from the rest of the Australian population.

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The enumeration of Aboriginal people in the population censuses conducted since 1971 has undergone progressive improvement due to a greater emphasis on public awareness campaigns, the involvement of Aboriginals directly in census collection activities, changes to question wording and design, the adoption of special field procedures and developments in data capture methods. A detailed description and an analysis of the impact on data quality from the various changes or procedures adopted is contained in Choi and Gray (1985) and the ABS paper on 1986 Census data quality.<sup>5</sup>

In October 1978 the Commonwealth Government adopted the following "working definition" of Aboriginality (which had already been in widespread use by both commonwealth and state government agencies since 1968):

An Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander is a person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community in which he or she lives.

The first two of these conditions are encompassed in the Aboriginal origin question included in censuses since 1971 (see below for questions). For people who have only Aboriginal ancestors the census definition generally presents no problem. People of "mixed origin" may legitimately choose to identify themselves as "Aboriginal", "Torres Strait Islander" or as not Aboriginal, depending upon their affiliations at the time of enumeration. The responses of these persons to the origin question will depend on their self-perception and their attitude to stating that self-perception. Hence, the census count of Aboriginals depends on the willingness of people to identify themselves as of Aboriginal origin. The result is that, regardless of changes in census practices, the size of the Aboriginal population as defined by the census count may fluctuate over time if the affiliations of individuals change.

### **Census Questions on Aboriginal Origin**

With the repeal of the relevant section of the constitution in 1967 it was decided that, in order to meet the statistical requirements of commonwealth and state authorities responsible for Aboriginal affairs, the 1971 Census question should attempt to ascertain the race with which persons identified themselves. Persons of more than one race were no longer required to indicate the mix of races but were asked to show the one to which they considered they belonged.

The 1971 Census origin question was:

What is each person's racial origin?

(If of mixed origin, indicate the one to which he considers himself to belong)



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(Tick one box only or give one origin only)

- ☐ 1 European origin
- ☐ 2 Aboriginal origin
- ☐ 3 Torres Strait Islander origin
- ☐ 4 Other origin (give one only) .....

In 1976, the origin question was identical in wording to that of 1971 although the layout of the question was slightly different. The question, however, generated considerable public criticism directed towards the use of the term "racial origin". Also, post-1976 Census evaluation studies showed that the form of question used in the 1976 Census caused confusion among respondents, particularly about what constituted "European origin".

Therefore, a new question on Aboriginal origin was developed and tested for the 1981 Census. Tests showed that the deletion of the response categories "European" and "Other" reduced respondent confusion and would avoid criticism from the public towards the use of the term "race." The 1981 question was:

Is the person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?

- For persons of mixed origin, indicate the one to which they consider themselves to belong.

- No ..... ☐ 1
- Yes, Aboriginal ..... ☐ 2
- Yes, Torres Strait Islander ..... ☐ 3

The same question was used in the 1986 and 1991 Censuses, although for several reasons it was located on different parts of the form each time.

### **Data Quality**

There has been wide variability between the states and territories in the size and direction of movements in the enumerated Aboriginal populations from one census to another since 1971. Between 1976 and 1981 there was a very slight (0.6 percent) decrease in the overall count of Aboriginals while there was a very large (42.4 percent) increase in the count of Aboriginals between the 1981 and 1991 Censuses which cannot be attributed solely to population growth.

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An analysis of the 1986 counts concluded that the data are free from any serious anomalies and that despite the very large increase between censuses the age-sex structures of the two census counts display a high level of consistency.<sup>6</sup>

Consistency checks with the census data collected on peoples' ancestry give broad level support for the 1986 Aboriginal counts and comparisons with corresponding data obtained from several non-census sources also provide confidence in the accuracy of the 1986 results.

A number of factors have contributed to the large increase recorded in the 1986 Census. Improved collection arrangements, a more effective public awareness campaign, better data processing methods and the effect of natural increase contributed to the increase. However, while the natural increase could be expected to contribute no more than about one fifth of the increase recorded and the other factors probably even less, the major influence is considered to be an increase in the propensity of people to record themselves and their households in the census as being Aboriginal.

### **Notes**

1. ABS Information Paper, *The Measurement of Ethnicity in the Australian Census of Population and Housing* (Catalogue No. 2172.0).
2. Reported in *Patterns of Prejudice*, Vol. 17, No. 2, 1983.
3. ABS Information Paper, *The Measurement of Ethnicity in the Australian Census of Population and Housing* (Catalogue No. 2172.0).
4. ABS Information Paper, *Census 86: Data Quality – Ancestry* (2603.0).
5. ABS Information Paper, *Census 86: Data Quality – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Counts* (2602.0).
6. ABS Information Paper, *Census 86: Data Quality – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Counts* (2602.0).

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# *Measurement of Ethnic Groups in Malaysia*

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## **Introduction**

Malaysia is a tropical country situated in the heart of South East Asia. Geographically, Peninsular Malaysia extends from the Thai border to Singapore, while the states of Sabah and Sarawak are separated by the South China Sea on the north-west of Borneo Island. The 13 states and two federal territories cover a total area of approximately 330,000 square kilometres.

Malaysia is a multiracial country with an estimated population of 18 million in 1991. The three major ethnic groups are Malays, Chinese and Indians. There are also many indigenous groups in Sabah and Sarawak. The approximate estimated population proportions are Malays and other indigenous groups (61 percent), Chinese (30 percent) and Indians (8 percent).

Information on ethnic groups is required for development planning, policy formulation and other decision-making purposes. It has also assumed vital importance in the light of the various five-year development plans since the First Outline Perspective Plan (OPP1) covering the period 1971-90. The development plans have been formulated and implemented within the framework of the New Economic Policy (NEP) which was introduced by the government in 1970, after the racial riots in 1969, to promote growth with equity with the objective of fostering national unity among the various races. The objectives of the New Economic Policy (NEP) were formulated within the context of a two-pronged strategy to:

1. reduce and eventually eradicate poverty by raising income levels and increasing employment opportunities for all Malaysians, irrespective of race; and
2. accelerate the process of restructuring Malaysian society to correct economic imbalances so as to reduce and eventually eliminate the identification of race with economic function.

The Second Outline Perspective Plan 1991-2000, released on 17th June 1991, has been formulated based on a policy which will be called the National Development Policy (NDP). The NDP will build upon the achievements during the Outline Perspective Plan 1 to accelerate the process of eradicating poverty and restructuring society so as to correct social and economic imbalances within the context of a rapidly expanding economy. Among others, it will rely more on the private sector to be involved in the restructuring objective by creating greater opportunities for its growth.

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In the federal constitution, under Article 153: Reservation of quotas in respect of services, permits, etc., for Malays and natives of any of the states of Sabah and Sarawak, Clause (1) states, "It shall be the responsibility of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong to safeguard the special position of the Malays and natives of any of the states of Sabah and Sarawak and the legitimate interests of other communities in accordance with the provisions of this Article".

### **Definitions in the Federal Constitution**

Under Article 160 (Interpretation) and Clause (2): "Aborigine" means an aborigine of the Malay Peninsula; "Malay" means a person who professes the religion of Islam, habitually speaks the Malay language and conforms to Malay custom: and

1. was before Merdeka Day born in the Federation or in Singapore or born of parents one of whom was born in the Federation or in Singapore, or is on that day domiciled in the Federation or in Singapore; or,
2. is the issue of such a person; "Merdeka Day" means the thirty-first day of August, nineteen hundred and fifty-seven.

Under Article 161A, Special position of natives of states of Sabah and Sarawak; Clause (6): In this article "native" means

1. in relation to Sarawak, a person who is a citizen and either belongs to one of the races specified in Clause (7) as indigenous to the State or is of mixed blood deriving exclusively from those races; and
2. in relation to Sabah, a person who is a citizen, is the child or grandchild of a person of a race indigenous to Sabah, and was born (whether on or after Malaysia Day or not) either in Sabah or to a father domiciled in Sabah at the time of the birth.

Clause (7): The races to be treated for the purposes of the definition of "natives" in Clause (6) as indigenous to Sarawak are the Bukitans, Bisayahs, Dusuns, Sea Dayaks, Land Dayaks, Kadayans, Kalabits, Kayans, Kenyahs (including Sabups and Sipengs), Kajangs (including Sekapans, Kejamans, Lahanans, Punans, Tanjongs and Kanowits), Lugats, Lisums, Malays, Melanos, Muruts, Penans, Sians, Tagals, Tabuns and Ukits.

### **Ethnic-related Questions in Population and Housing Census 1991**

For the purpose of the population census, the term ethnic group is used. It implies a group of persons connected (related) by common language, religion, customs and related matters.

Classification is by self-identification. Although ancestral roots or racial origins are major elements, they are neither sufficient nor necessary conditions.

There is only one single direct question on this subject, "To what ethnic group, community or dialect group do you belong?" The census enumerator is referred to a code card provided. It should be noted that, consistent with the usual practice, the answer is based on self-identification of the respondent.

Another related topic is religion. It asks, "What is your religion?" and lists Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism/Taoism/Other Traditional Chinese Religion, Tribal/Folk Religion, Others (specify), No Religion.

Another related subject is citizenship which asks a straight question, "What is your citizenship?", and prompts the respondent with a few listed citizenships: Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand, Brunei Darusalam and Others (specify). Again, the respondent will give his/her own reply based on his/her knowledge and understanding. The census enumerators are in no position to seek documentary confirmation. Self-identification is the usual and common practice in census operations for most subjects included.

#### **How do the Above Ethnic-related Questions Attempt to Identify or Measure Ethnicity?**

The single direct question, "To what ethnic group, community or dialect group do you belong?", will provide the first line of information which will then be cross-checked with the answers from the questions on religion and citizenship. This further refinement will give a more consistent estimate of the population numbers of the ethnic groups as defined in the federal constitution, especially with respect to Malays and natives and other indigenous groups.

#### **How well do these Questions Succeed or Measure Ethnicity?**

From previous census results and current population estimates derived primarily from birth and death registrations, the broad ethnic distribution of the total population is available. These estimates will be compared against the census counts. Although the final census information is still not available, it is anticipated that, on a macro basis, the current estimates should be close to the census counts.

#### **Limitations in Census Questions and Approaches and their Impact on Measurement of Ethnicity**

As mentioned previously, the census adopts primarily a "self-identification" approach. This approach seems to be the most practical and widely adopted. Again, the final census results are



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still not available. However, it is anticipated that the results will be consistent with observed trends.

A post-enumeration survey (PES) has also been conducted to evaluate the accuracy/precision of the census counts and some characteristics including ethnic groups. The PES should give further insights.

### **Results from Previous Censuses**

Although the official results from the August 1991 Population and Housing Census of Malaysia are still not available, an insight into the trends of the ethnic population distribution could be gleaned from the 1970 and 1980 Census results. Incidentally, both censuses also adopted the self-identification approach with direct questions.

From the General Report of the 1980 Malaysia Population Census Vol. 1, page 18, we obtain the percentage distribution of the population by ethnic group and region for 1970 and 1980.

For Peninsular Malaysia, out of a total population of 9.18 million in 1970, the proportions were Malays (52.7 percent), Chinese (35.8 percent), Indians (10.7 percent) and Others (0.8 percent). The 1980 population was 11.43 million, and the corresponding proportions were Malays (55.3 percent), Chinese (33.8 percent), Indians (10.2 percent) and Others (0.7 percent).

In the case of Sabah, the 1970 total population was 653,000. The proportions were Pribumis (approximately all Indigenous Groups) (76.5 percent), Chinese (21.3 percent) and Others (2.2 percent). The 1980 population was 1.01 million and the proportions were Pribumis (82.9 percent), Chinese (16.2 percent) and Others (0.9 percent).

In the case of Sarawak, the 1970 population was 976,000. The proportions were Malays (18.6 percent), Melanaus (5.5 percent), Ibans (31.1 percent), Bidayuhs (8.6 percent), Other Indigenous (5.2 percent), Chinese (30.1 percent) and Others (0.9 percent). The 1980 population was 1.31 million and the proportions were Malays (19.7 percent), Melanaus (5.7 percent), Ibans (30.3 percent), Bidayuhs (8.2 percent), Chinese (29.5 percent), Other Indigenous (5.3 percent) and Others (1.3 percent).

### **Peninsular Malaysia**

As mentioned earlier, the results of the August 1991 Malaysia Population Census are still not available. However, from the Department of Statistics publication "Current Population Estimates, Peninsular Malaysia 1990", April 1991, some broad trends are indicated in the major ethnic composition of the population. Incidentally, for the moment we are analysing the trends separately for Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak, primarily because the 1980 Census did

not collect detail on ethnic groups for Sabah. We hope to be able to go back to a more additive approach for the whole of Malaysia from the data of the 1991 Census.

The population of Peninsular Malaysia in 1980 was 11.4 million. Of this total, 6.3 million were Malays (55.3 percent), 3.9 million Chinese (33.8 percent) and 1.2 million Indians (10.2 percent). The population grew at an annual rate of 2.4 percent per year during the period 1980-90, that is, 0.2 percentage points higher than that observed during the period 1970-80. However, the growth rates during these two periods are not strictly comparable because the former does not make allowance for net out-migration.

During the period 1980-90, the size of all ethnic groups increased but at differential rates. The increase was highest for Malays (3.0 percent a year) and this was due primarily to their higher fertility rates. The Chinese recorded the lowest increase (1.7 percent a year) and the Indians in between at 2.0 percent a year. The population of Peninsular Malaysia at 30 June 1990 was estimated to be 14.6 million. Of this total, 8.5 million were Malays (58.2 percent), 4.6 million Chinese (31.3 percent) and 1.4 million Indians (9.8 percent).

### **Sabah and Sarawak**

From the Department of Statistics publication "Current Population Estimates, Sabah and Sarawak, 1989", May 1990, some broad trends are seen in the major ethnic composition of the population. As a result of the significantly higher growth rate of the Bumiputra group (approximating indigenous population), there was a change in the proportion of this group in Sabah. In 1989, Bumiputra and Others made up 86.0 percent of Sabah's population compared with 84.0 percent in 1980. Conversely, the percentage of Chinese decreased from 16 percent in 1980 to 14.0 percent in 1989.

The post-censal growth rates among the Bumiputeras (approximating indigenous population) and the Chinese in Sarawak were, however, more or less similar and there were only marginal changes in ethnic composition between 1980 and 1989. In 1980 Bumiputera and Others accounted for 70.5 percent of the total population and in 1989 this percentage increased to 70.9. The percentage of Chinese, on the other hand, decreased marginally from 29.5 percent in 1980 to 29.1 percent in 1989.

### **Conclusion**

In the context of Malaysia's socio-economic and ethnic situation, the collection and presentation of population statistics by ethnic groups are vital to continued growth and stability. The self-identification approach adopted in population censuses and other household surveys provides generally acceptable ethnic proportions at various levels for broad policy formulation and planning. However, for the specific implementation of many affirmative action programmes and projects, the more legal approach of documentary proof and evidence is applied.

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# *Nationality in the Population Statistics in the U.S.S.R.*

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## **Introduction**

The Soviet Union, a state which after nearly 70 years ceased to exist at the end of 1991, was one of the most multinational in the world. It was populated by more than 100 nationalities and ethnic groups. This ethnic diversity was an enormous factor in determining the political, economic, cultural, social and philosophical diversity of its peoples.

Prior to the revolution of 1917, the nationality (ethnic origin) of a person in Russia did not have any great bearing on his social and economic status. His religion played a far greater role. The Eastern Orthodox Church was the state religion. Once converted to the Orthodox religion, any subject could overcome the restrictions placed on persons of a different faith. However, during the final decades of the nineteenth century the issue of nationality became more acute, and was politicized.

After the 1917 revolution, the equality of peoples was proclaimed and national territories were formed. The Soviet Union was formed in 1922. It had a policy of supporting the social and cultural development of all peoples. By the end of the 1920s, however, this policy was turned around. It was replaced by the policy of unification, the suppression of national identity under the guise of overcoming national and religious prejudices, and repression of those with a national consciousness under the pretence of fighting nationalism. The national question has always been one of the major and most acute problems in the U.S.S.R., though it was officially regarded as solved.

This policy of forced fusion into a "single Soviet nation" sometimes took on monstrous forms and was inconsistent at the same time. Along with the scrupulous maintenance of the superficial and decorative aspects of the national policy (proportionally balanced composition of the Soviets and upper ranks of the local bureaucratic apparatus, equal quotas and privileges for acquiring higher education, etc.), there was suppression of national identity and discrimination in the social and political sphere.

Today the national issue has taken on acute and extremely morbid forms; in many ways it predetermined the disintegration of the U.S.S.R. and the downfall of the communist regime, and has exacerbated the conflicts in a number of former Soviet republics.

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The acuteness of the national problem, combined with new opportunities for analysis and discussion, has focused attention on concrete historical issues, such as the level of socio-economic and socio-cultural development of the constituent nation groups, as well as questions pertaining to their fertility, settlement on various territories, the ethnic aspects of migration and the study of ethnic processes.

The past decades have seen the development of sciences such as ethnic demography, ethnic sociology and ethnic geography. An ethnic statistics laboratory was set up at the Institute of Ethnography of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences<sup>1</sup>; it has since gained scientific prestige and achieved interesting results. Numerous fundamental works were published during this period. Special mention should be made of the series *Peoples of the World* which was published from 1956 to 1964, as well as a number of monographs (Yu.V. Bromley 1973; V.I. Kozlov 1969, 1977; Current Ethnic Processes in the U.S.S.R. 1975; etc.); a large number of articles has also appeared in the journal *Sovetskaya etnografiya*. Since the 1960s demographers have been focusing a great deal of attention on the study of the ethnic differentiation of demographic processes and reproduction in individual nationalities, and have been taking the ethnic factor into account when assessing tendencies. The system of information on the social, economic and demographic processes in different nationalities has been expanded and improved.

The experience of the past decades, especially recent years, has shown that detailed statistical information on the individual nationalities is the most pressing problem of the day.

This paper discusses the recording of ethnic factors in the various systems of population statistics in Russia and the U.S.S.R. Most of our attention is devoted to the information system currently in effect on U.S.S.R. territory. The Soviet Union no longer exists as a single state, but the problems related to the national (ethnic) factor continue to exist for the new independent states. The information system developed in the U.S.S.R. has also remained unchanged.

The current statistical systems are based on two methods of determining an individual's nationality (or ethnic origin), namely self-determination (self-identification) and documentary proof. Either way, it is assumed that each individual belongs to one, and only one, ethnic community. From any point of view this is a convention that ignores many marginal or transitional groups which may be undergoing assimilation and exposure to other cultures.

Furthermore, each of these methods has its own weaknesses. For example, in the case of self-determination we come across situations where nationality is determined by other individuals, that is, parents or other adults in the case of children, or where there has been no personal contact between the interviewer and the respondent. Situations like these affect the accuracy of the information received.

The use of documentary sources is associated with other conditions, i.e. it precludes any change in the nationality of an individual, and ensures the strict principle of inheritance of nationality along with adherence to specific conventions when determining the nationality of children in ethnically mixed families.

The difference in the fundamental principles and arbitrary rules of determining nationality of the two systems suggests the possibility of discrepancies in information obtained from different sources regarding the same person.

This results in the problem of limited comparability of information obtained from different sources. This problem is of primary significance in ethnic demography where a multitude of demographic indices is derived from a comparison of census data and the results of an ongoing survey. The degree of discrepancy in the information from different sources and its effect on the accuracy of the indices calculated on their basis has never been studied.

Ethnic statistical information in the U.S.S.R. has evolved during the course of history, but it has not been continuous progress, for the widening and narrowing of the scope of the indices gathered, the level of detail of the information and the degree of its accessibility were directly influenced by the social and political situation. In some cases, the processes by which ethnic statistical information was collected underwent direct political pressure. For instance, in the history of Soviet ethnic statistics, we know of many cases where entire ethnic groups were, for political reasons, renamed or simply disregarded as separate nationalities and their representatives included in the dominant nationality, not to mention the cases where, under the pressure of the political situation, people tried to conceal their true nationality and register themselves as belonging to the dominant group which was not subject to this pressure. All this left an indelible trace on the human psyche, and continued to have an effect even after the situation changed.

We also know of reverse cases where the introduction of economic or social privileges for minority peoples on the verge of extinction and dissolution spurred people to include themselves and their children in these nationalities in order to reap the benefits. Jews and Germans, for example, towards the end of the 1980s were subject to less stringent emigration requirements; changes such as these can very well lead to an influx of intermediate, transitional groups to these nationalities. Furthermore, the recent increase in national population movements can bring about changes in the national composition of the population of some territories.

These and other complications must be overcome if we are to solve the problem of determining how the size of certain nationalities changed during the Soviet period. Attempts to do so are already underway (Yu.A. Polyakov, I.N. Kiselev 1980).



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At the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s, the situation in ethnic statistics in the U.S.S.R. was more or less stable. However, the breakdown of the Union into many independent states could have given rise to major difficulties of which we are still unaware.

### **Pre-War Population Censuses**

In Russia, the collection of mass information that could be used to establish the ethnic composition of the population began in the first half of the eighteenth century, at the time when population censuses were introduced. Information on ethnic origin, mother tongue and religious denomination was gathered only during the first five censuses, the first conducted in 1719, and the fifth in 1795. Despite the numerous errors present in the censuses, the information they provided makes it possible to establish by indirect methods the ethnic composition of the greater part of the population of Russia at that time (V.M. Kabuzan 1990; V.I. Kozlov 1982, 34).

Population censuses are the main source of information on the national (ethnic) composition of the population of the U.S.S.R. and its individual territories, as well as the economic, socio-cultural and demographic characteristics of individual peoples. A total of nine general censuses has been conducted in the Russian Empire and the U.S.S.R. (in 1897, 1920, 1926, 1937, 1939, 1959, 1970, 1979, 1989).<sup>2</sup> Between the general, all-union population censuses, a number of localities conducted their own censuses because of an urgent need for precise data on the numbers and composition of the population (based on the main characteristics including nationality). For example, censuses were conducted in Azerbaijan, Armenia and the Crimean ASSR during 1931 (T. Semenov 1932).

The questionnaire of the first general population census in 1897 did not include a direct question on nationality, but rather questions which could indirectly determine the nationality of a person, such as mother tongue and religious denomination (see Appendix 1).

Disregard for the recommendations of the International Statistics Congress of 1872 and the use of mother tongue as the main determinant of ethnic origin (though the language recorded was the one indicated by the respondent himself) resulted in a highly overestimated number of Russians. Russian was the official language, the language taught in school, the language of the official religion and the language of international communication. It was spoken not only by Slavic peoples, but also by non-Slavic groups which had converted to the Orthodox religion but had not quite been totally assimilated at that time (mainly peoples of the North, the area extending along the Volga River [Povolzh'ye] and the Urals). For example, the census showed that the "Russian" language group consisted of 83,900,000 (66.8 percent of the population of the Russian Empire), whereas the data of ethnographers (V.I. Kozlov 1982, 38) indicate that Russians constituted only 51,500,000 (about 41 percent) of the population. The numbers of certain other large peoples whose language was used by small allied peoples were also somewhat exaggerated.

Another significant shortcoming of the 1897 Census from the point of view of ethnic statistics was the incomplete and frequently inaccurate tallying of the Turkic peoples of Central Asia and the Caucasus, as well as the indigenous population of the eastern and northern outskirts of the Russian Empire.

The final analysis of the 1897 Census showed that 146 languages and dialects were spoken; it was therefore assumed that the same number of peoples existed. However, ethnographers consider that, in reality, there were more ethnic communities, just as there were more languages and dialects.

In the compilation of the census, the nationality characteristic, which was identified with mother tongue, was combined with age, religious denomination, education, family status and occupational group.

The publication of the results of this population census took eight years, and was completed in 1905. The bibliography for the 1897 Census and the population censuses of the U.S.S.R. is presented quite fully in Gozulov's book (A.I. Gozulov 1936).

The next population census was conducted after the revolution of 1917, in 1920. Its questionnaire included a direct question on nationality: What do you consider to be your nationality? Beginning with this census and in all the subsequent population censuses of the U.S.S.R., nationality was recorded from the words of the respondent, without the need for any documents, i.e. on the basis of self-determination. In the opinion of ethnographers, this approach "is in line with modern scientific concepts regarding the essence of an ethnic group, and allows for greater flexibility to take into account the effect of ethnic processes on the numbers of the ethnos" (Yu.V. Arutyunyan et al. 1984, 39).<sup>3</sup>

The language spoken in the family or by the mother was recorded as the mother tongue (see Appendix 1).

The population Census of 1920 was conducted under conditions of civil war, and covered only a part of the country. Its results were never published in full. The data on the national composition of the population of the U.S.S.R. in 1920 were brought together in a special bulletin.

The all-union population Census of 1926 included the entire country. This was the only census in which the term "nationality" [Russ. natsional'nost'] was replaced by "national (ethnic) group" [Russ. narodnost'] in the wording of the question on nationality; this was in line with the concept of nationality prevalent at the time.<sup>4</sup> As noted in some of the instructions concerning this question, this particular wording stressed the necessity of producing information on the tribal (ethnographic) composition of the population. At the same time, the directions reminded

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respondents that it was up to them to determine their national origin, and that once recorded, it could not be changed.

Mother tongue was identified as the language spoken (see Appendix 1).

The Census of 1926 stands out as being highly detailed in ethnic data and in the publication of its results.

In all, 190 nationalities and national groups were recorded (160 were nationalities and national groups domiciled within the boundaries of U.S.S.R. territory, and 34 were nationalities living mainly beyond its borders). There were distributions combining the nationality characteristic with demographic, socio-economic and socio-cultural ones, i.e. age, sex, family status, mother tongue, education, social status, economic sector (for the employed), principal occupation, place of birth and length of residence at the place of enumeration. Furthermore, different aspects of the language variable were examined: 1) the language of one's own nationality; 2) the language of the republic or autonomous region of domicile; 3) the Russian language; 4) one of the other languages most common in the locality of domicile; 5) other languages. A special study was conducted on physical infirmities and psychiatric disorders by nationality.

The population Census of 1937 again incorporated the term "nationality" [natsional'nost'] in the question concerning nationality. The respondent indicated the nationality he belonged to. The same principle of self-determination was also maintained for the question on mother tongue (see Appendix 1).

One of the distinguishing features of the 1937 Census was the introduction of the question on religion.

The ruling communist party and government of the country were hostile to all religion. Active antireligious propaganda and antichurch measures were conducted over a period of 20 years and many adherents of all religions were subjected to repression. The question of religion was not regarded as an indirect ethnic determinant, but was included in the census program for political purposes. This fact was not concealed. The following is a typical text of those times:

Religion is one of the most persistent and at the same time one of the most hostile antisocialist survivals of the past in people's minds (at times even unknowingly to the believer himself). Therefore, our achievements in ... nationalities will serve as a brilliant example of our successes in altering the ideology and consciousness of a truly new [kind of] human being (All-Union Population Census 1936).

Only persons 16 years of age and older, i.e. persons with formed personal convictions, were instructed to answer the question on religion. The instructions also indicated that the past



official religious denomination of the respondent or his parents need not be indicated. If the respondent considers himself to be a non-believer, this should be recorded. If the respondent is a believer, this should also be indicated, and if any particular religion is practised, the religion should be stated (e.g., Orthodox, Lutheran, Baptist, Muslim, Jew, Buddhist).

The plans for the census included quick and detailed compilations of the data at the territorial level, along with detailed distributions for the nationalities.

The preliminary results of the census revealed the country's tremendous losses in human lives as a result of the repressions and hunger of 1933 (Ye.M. Andreyev, L.Ye. Darsky, T.L. Kharkova 1990). Despite religious persecution, more than one half of Soviet citizens claimed to be believers. The census was declared unsatisfactory, and its data incomplete. The organizers of the census were subjected to repression, and nearly all of them died in the GULAG. The processing of the census data was very quickly terminated, and its results destroyed. As a result of the recent efforts of scientists (A.G. Volkov, F.D. Lifshits, M.S. Tol'ts and others), the 1937 Census was rehabilitated. Fragmentary data were retrieved from the archives, including data on the national composition of the population of the constituent republics, which were published for the first time in 1990 (Yu.A. Polyakov, V.B. Zhiromskaya, I.N. Kiselev 1990; From the Archives of the U.S.S.R. State Committee on Statistics 1990; 1937 Population Census 1991).

The complete list of nationalities included 109 names of nationalities and ethnic groups. Analysis of the 1937 Census data reported 95 nationalities, 61 of which lived predominantly within the territory of the U.S.S.R.

Such a drastic decrease in the number of recorded nationalities as compared with the 1926 Census can now be attributed to the abrupt change in the policy on nationalities at the end of the 1920s. The policy of support for all nationalities and peoples and for their cultural development in their own language was replaced by a policy of accelerated convergence and assimilation of minority peoples by the majorities. A policy of russification was introduced and the national schools, newspapers and theatres of minority peoples were closed down. The personality cult of J.V. Stalin also played a significant role; at the Eighth Congress of Soviets in 1936, he announced that the Soviet Union was made up of about 60 nationalities and national [ethnic] groups. The next census was based on this figure.

It was conducted in 1939. The questions concerning nationality and mother tongue were formulated in the same way as the 1937 Census, except that the question of religion was dropped from the questionnaire.<sup>5</sup> The planned census output included data on the national composition of the country and its territories, the distribution of the population according to mother tongue, along with other characteristics and combinations of indicators. The nationality characteristic was to be combined with characteristics such as age, education, social status, occupation.

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Due to the war that began in 1941 the 1939 Census was not completed. Very limited census results were published. Some of the tables incorporating the nationality characteristic were preserved only in the archives.

In recent years, special studies have been carried out to reassess the data on the numbers and composition of the prewar population of the U.S.S.R. They have shown that the results of all the prewar censuses require correction for different reasons. Demographers are faced with the task of restoring continuous statistical series and the entire demographic history of the country since 1897. More or less detailed series of this type are available only for the 1920-1959 period (History of the Population for 1920-1959, 1990).

### **Post-War Population Censuses**

During the postwar period, four general population censuses were conducted in the U.S.S.R.: in 1959, 1970, 1979 and in 1989.

All of these censuses included a direct question on nationality. However, the instructions for the 1959, 1970 and 1979 Censuses included a number of new, more precise instructions for determining the nationality of children of mixed marriages; in cases where the parents had difficulty determining the nationality of their children, it recommended that preference be given to the mother's nationality. This recommendation was withdrawn in the 1989 Census (see Appendix 1).

The question concerning mother tongue was posed in the same way as in previous censuses. Beginning with the 1970 Census this question was supplemented with a question on fluency in a second language, which could be any language of the peoples of the U.S.S.R., i.e. peoples living predominantly on U.S.S.R. territory, a list of which had been approved beforehand (see Appendix 1 for instructions on answering this question in various censuses).

There were 126 nationalities and ethnic groups recorded in the 1959 Census, 104 in 1970, 101 in 1979, and 128 in 1989. Usually, this complete list was used only to characterize the national and language composition of the U.S.S.R. population. In cross-tabulations the number of published nationalities is considerably smaller.

Appendix 2 gives a general picture of the cross-tabulations in which the nationality characteristic was featured in recent population censuses of the U.S.S.R.

The distributions of the nationality characteristic with the main ethnic characteristics (mother tongue, and from 1970 second language), demographic characteristics (sex, age, marital status, size of family, etc.), socio-economic characteristics (occupation, social group, source of income) and socio-cultural characteristics (education) were repeated with more or less detail in all the



postwar censuses. This has made it possible to trace the changes in these characteristics in individual nationalities over a period of 30 years.

From census to census, the cross-tabulations with the nationality characteristic have become increasingly more detailed.

The 1959 Census was slightly more extensive than the 1939, but it was less extensive than the one for 1926. On the other hand, its special importance lay in the fact that, for the first time since 1926 fairly complete data were obtained on the national composition of the population and the principal demographic, socio-economic and socio-cultural characteristics of the individual nationalities of the U.S.S.R. as a whole and for all of its administrative and territorial units.

The Census of 1970 yielded the first data on the language characteristics of the population; data on the individual nationalities were broken out by mother tongue, fluency in a second language and by age.

Among the new topics covered in this census were data on migrants by age, nationality and social group, cross-tabulated with places of origin and departure (village to city, city to another city, city to village, and village to village).

The 1979 Census was larger than the 1970. The section on the ethno-linguistic characteristics of the population contained information on nationality, mother tongue and age, supplemented by data on second-language fluency. This census contained new socio-economic data on the individual nationalities, such as distributions of each nationality by source of income and social status, while occupations were shown by economic sector. The mobility characteristics of individuals of different nationalities were broken out by length of time spent in a given area.

From the demographic point of view, one of the most significant accomplishments of the 1979 Census was the expansion of the demographic part of the questionnaire. This included, first of all, a return to the four categories of marital status (married, single, widowed, divorced) instead of two (married, single); and secondly, a question for women 16 years of age and older on the number of children born at the time of the census. These questions in combination with other characteristics yielded extremely valuable information for a more detailed study of the ethnic dimension of matrimonial and reproductive processes.

In terms of nationality data the 1989 Census was similar to 1979. Information on the mobility of the different nationalities was supplemented by information on previous place of residence of people who had moved. The fertility data included a table showing both all females and married females by number of children that were alive at census-time.



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For any census, the level of detail and degree of detail of the output depend on the funds available. Normally, limited ethnic data are processed for the primary, main census compilations. The most detailed information on the characteristics of ethnic groups is usually found in supplementary tabulations that are based on selected material from the census. Due to limited funds, these data may not be produced, or they may be delayed by several years after the census. When these results were published, it was only in scientific publications.

For example, a supplementary report on the 1979 Census provided information on married couples by age and nationality of spouses, and characterized the population according to nationality and source of income, occupation, education and age.

A special analysis of 1979 Census sample data was carried out in 1983-84 by A.G. Volkov (Demography Department of the Statistics Research Institute of the U.S.S.R. State Committee on Statistics). It involved five percent of all families in the country. It produced data on the formation and development of ethnically mixed families and their role in the processes of change and assimilation of the population. The results of this analysis are presented in the author's work (A.G. Volkov 1989).

The official publications of census results provide far less detail on the nationality characteristic than the analyses of the census data. All the tabulations for the territories involved can be found in the archives, and they are now accessible to scientists. However, there still are some bureaucratic and technical obstacles that must be overcome. Up to the end of the 1980s census data used in scientific and other papers could be published only with the censor's permission. Following the abolition of censorship and the declassification of certain material, they can now be published more freely.

The results of the 1959 Census have come out in 16 volumes. Data on the national composition of the population, as well as the demographic, socio-economic and socio-cultural characteristics of the nationalities are found in each volume rather than in a separate one (Results of the All-Union Population Census of 1959).

The results of the 1970 Census have come out in seven volumes based on subject matter. Data on the national and language composition of the population of the U.S.S.R. and the individual republics, as well as the age, marital and educational composition of the population of the separate nationalities are contained in a single volume (Results of the All-Union Population Census of 1970).

The results of the 1979 Census were at first published in a single volume (Numbers and Composition...). Compared to the statistical analysis, the ethnic aspect was inadequately presented in this publication. This publication included data on the national and language composition of the population of the country and individual territories, the distribution of

ethnically homogeneous and mixed families according to the number of family members, average family size, as well as the distribution of the female population of the 15 major nationalities of the Union republics according to the number of children born to them. Publication of the data of this census was continued in 1989 and completed in 1991. It consists of 10 volumes, two of which are devoted to population characteristics at the national level (Results of the All-Union Population Census of 1979).

Official publication of the full results of the 1989 Census has not even begun. So far, the U.S.S.R. State Committee on Statistics has published reports in central newspapers (April 1991) and in the Journal of Statistics [Vestnik statistiki 1990 and 1991]. A series of small brochures with mass circulation was published in 1990-1991; one of them contained data on the national composition of the population (National Composition of the Population of the U.S.S.R. 1991). However, today the absence of extensive publications on census results is due not to censorship, but rather to technical and economic difficulties.

The most complete information on the literature devoted to population censuses in Russia and the U.S.S.R. and publications of their results can be found in bibliographic indexes (List of Literature and Information on the Theory, Organization, Procedure and Results of Population Censuses 1967; Fundamental Literature on Population Censuses 1987; 1937 Population Census of the U.S.S.R. 1990).

### **Sample Surveys**

The 1959 Census data made it possible, for the first time since the 1926 Census, to get some idea of the degree of ethnic differences in the country's matrimonial and reproductive levels, and these proved to be quite substantial. However, this information was far from sufficient for a more profound study of these processes.

As a result sample surveys, which began to include questions on nationality, or covered territories with homogeneous populations, became the main sources of information for studying the ethnic aspect of nuptiality and fertility in the U.S.S.R.

In addition to the large number of local or narrowly specialized sample surveys that were conducted in different parts of the country, a series of retrospective surveys of birth and marriage rates was conducted on a nationwide scale by the Demography Department of the Scientific Research Institute of the U.S.S.R. Central Statistics Bureau in 1967-1968, 1972, 1975, 1978 and in 1981.

Though the system of sampling was not quite perfect for studying demographic processes, the birth and marriage indices were nevertheless quite representative for large territorial units and large ethnic groups.



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As in population censuses, nationality was recorded on the basis of self-determination. Questions specially formulated for studying nuptiality and fertility rates were posed only to females 18 to 59 years of age.

The following characteristics were considered to be the most significant in determining the way of life of a person and his entire family: residence in settlements of different types (city or village), size of city, level of education. In all these surveys data were presented at the national level. Nationality (ethnic origin) was considered a factor in the matrimonial and reproductive behaviour in all the social and demographic groups of the population.

In order to obtain statistically reliable indices on the basis of various demographic and social characteristics, the number of nationalities in the analysis was varied according to the level of statistical detail. For example, the largest number of nationalities (34) was obtained with the least detailed treatment and the most general information. With a more detailed treatment only 15 major nationalities of the Union republics, and sometimes Tatars and Jews, were differentiated. In some cases, certain nationalities with similar demographic behaviour and cultures even had to be grouped together.

In 1969 the Scientific Research Institute of the U.S.S.R. Central Statistics Bureau conducted on the basis of a 1967 survey a mail opinion survey of women regarding the ideal and anticipated number of children in their families. This survey yielded information from 33,600 married women. This made it possible to determine the quantitative characteristics of the opinions of spouses of different nationalities and to study the effect of the main socio-economic characteristics of the spouses on the development of this opinion.

From that time, a question concerning anticipated number of children became traditional for studying birthrates in the U.S.S.R. It was intended not only for comparative analysis of the reproductive intentions of different ethno-social groups of the population, but also for developing a hypothesis for improving the birthrate in the near future. At the beginning of the 1970s, data on the number of children anticipated by women of different nationalities were already being used to predict the birthrate, particularly for territories with nationally and demographically heterogeneous populations (e.g., the urban population of the Central Asian republics, the urban and rural population of Kazakhstan).

The data from the sample surveys of 1967-1968, 1969, 1972, 1975, 1978 and 1981 were never officially published. An analysis of their results can now be found in the publications of the Demography Department of the Scientific Research Institute of the U.S.S.R. Central Statistics Bureau (for the period prior to 1985-1986 see Bibliographical Index of papers on demography and demographic statistics for 1963-1985 by research officers of the Demography Department of the Scientific Research Institute of the U.S.S.R. State Statistics Committee).



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A sample socio-demographic survey of the population in 1985, conducted like a mini-census, covered five percent of the entire population, and was representative of the entire population of the country. The section of the survey schedule which contained information on each individual was basically a copy of the 1979 Census form. It contained a question on nationality but no questions on language. The demographic questions were more detailed.

In the survey form, the nationality characteristic was used mainly as a factor in the differentiation of demographic processes.

The questions in this survey made it possible to continue with a more detailed study of the individual nationalities in terms of matrimonial and reproductive processes in combination with certain social characteristics. The probabilities of first marriage, divorce (including the relation of this to the number of children in a marriage) and second marriage were obtained for 18 nationalities (15 major nationalities of the Union republics, Tatars, Jews and Germans) in 1980-1984. For groups of nationalities (Slavic peoples, nationalities of the Baltic states, peoples of the Central Asian republics), these indices were obtained in combination with certain demographic and social characteristics (age at first marriage, duration of marriage, level of education, type of residential area, size of town, etc.). Information on births in wedlock, family formation, intervals between births, and the number of children anticipated by the female population was obtained for the same groups.

Several tables were devoted to the problems and characteristics of ethnically homogeneous and mixed families, for example, the nationality of the children in mixed marriages; the distribution of ethnically homogeneous and mixed married couples by age and level of education of the wife; the distribution of families according to type and ethnic composition.

The results of the detailed demographic analysis of the 1985 sample survey have not appeared in any official publication. Some very limited results, including the ethnic data, were published in 1986 in the Journal of Statistics (*Vestnik statistiki*, Nos. 8, 9), as well as in papers by the research officers of the Demography Department of the Scientific Research Institute of the U.S.S.R. State Committee on Statistics who were also the authors of the survey programs and who contributed to the analysis of the nuptialty, fertility and family data. (A.G. Volkov, L.Ye. Darsky, V.A. Belova, G.A. Bondarskaya, I.P. Il'ina).

In 1989, the U.S.S.R. State Committee on Statistics conducted a survey on the standard of living of 50,000 young families (both husband and wife under 30 years of age). This yielded information on the income of young families of different nationalities and their degree of satisfaction with their material situation, birthrate in relation to housing conditions, opinions regarding ideal number of children and feelings about living with their parents (*Problems of Youth and the Young Family*, 1990).

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### **Current Population Statistics Based on Administrative Records**

General population censuses in the U.S.S.R. were conducted at intervals of at least 10 years and gave a snapshot of the population at a particular moment in time. The recording of population, the events taking place it during the years between censuses and their effect on its qualitative and quantitative composition were covered in several sources of current statistics.

### **Internal Passport**

Passport registration for the population of the U.S.S.R. was introduced at the beginning of the 1930s. However, for many years, it applied only to the urban population. It was only recently that the issuance of passports to all rural inhabitants was completed.

The passport is the main identification document of a Soviet citizen. It is issued at the age of 16. It contains the following information about its holder: surname, given name and patronymic, date and place of birth, permanent address in full and the date of registration for residence permit, date and place of registration of marriage, full name of spouse, date of birth of children, nationality.<sup>6</sup> The latter is based on the nationality of the parents as recorded in the birth certificate. In the case where the parents are of different nationalities, the existing regulations recommend that the decision be made by the person receiving the passport. If no definite preference is expressed it is recommended that the mother's nationality be chosen. In practice, however, this principle is often violated, i.e. the wish of the person receiving the passport is hardly ever considered and the mother's nationality is automatically recorded. In certain regions where the male stereotype still dominates, preference is given to the father's nationality. In a situation where the nationality is of social significance, preference is automatically given to the nationality of the parent when that nationality either predominates in number on the territory, or has certain advantages, or is not discriminated against. This may not always correspond to the wishes of the person receiving the passport. With a change in the political situation the preference may also change.

Thus, no consistent principle is followed in determining nationality in this form of administrative record. However, the nationality recorded in a person's passport can not be changed.

The rules of inheriting nationality in ethnically mixed marriages are the subject of a special study (L. Terent'yeva 1969; G.A. Sergeyeva, Ya.S. Smirnova 1971; A.G. Volkov 1991, etc.). These studies, which were conducted at different times, have established that a group's traditions and socio-political situation are also reflected in the rates of degree of preference given to different nationalities.

When a passport is issued, a special document identical to the passport is filled in and kept in the files of the district office of the militia.<sup>7</sup>



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Up to the middle of the 1970s, this form contained information on both the nationality of the passport-holder and that of his parents. This made it possible to use this type of record to study the choice of nationality by children of mixed marriages. When a new system of passports with no time limit was introduced in the 1970s, only the nationality of the passport-holder was left on the document, which made it much less valuable as a source of information for ethnographic and ethno-sociological studies.

Passport data on nationality are principally of socio-political importance, but they are also used by sociologists, ethnographers and demographers for scientific purposes. The question of removing nationality from passports has been raised several times in recent years. This could lead to considerable change in the various systems used to survey the population since many of them use administrative records to collect statistical information. Public opinion, however, has not been unanimous on this and the present situation suggests that nationality will continue to be recorded in documents for a long time to come, at least until nationality (ethnic origin) loses its socio-political significance. In the end, however, each independent state (former republics of the U.S.S.R.) will make its own decision in this matter.

### **Population Movements**

At the beginning of the 1930s the Soviet Union introduced strict registration of all people at their place of residence (residence permit). This registration ("signing in" and "signing out") of persons residing on the territory of each militia precinct was handled by its passport office. The residence permit records 1) when a passport is issued, and 2) when an individual moves to another place of permanent residence.

When moving to a new place of residence, each person must obtain permission at the local militia station. This procedure remains in effect today.

With each change of residence, arrival and departure slips are drawn up, which are used only for address information purposes. Statistical survey cards are also filled out in exactly the same way. These cards are expressly intended for statistical analysis and are the primary documents containing information on migrants. Along with other characteristics, they also include nationality.

Nationality is recorded from the passport. Separate cards are not made out for children under the age of 16 arriving or departing with adults. All information concerning the children is entered into the card of one of the parents but the nationality of the children is not registered.

Compilation of these data with the nationality characteristic is carried out only in some years, by the sampling method. For instance, close to the time of the population censuses of 1979 and



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1989 the sex and age distribution of migrants of certain nationalities aged 16 years and older was obtained.

These data can also be used to study the mobility of the population of different nationalities. However, their main purpose is to provide a current estimate of the national composition of the population of the separate territorial units. This method of assessment has been developed by the Demography Department of the Statistics Research Institute of the U.S.S.R. State Committee on Statistics (L.P. Kuvshinova 1984), but for various reasons has not yet been used.

There has been very limited publication of the analysis of these statistics on migration (Demographic Yearbook 1990).

### **Vital Statistics**

In Russia prior to the revolution of 1917, civil records were kept by the church; nationality was not recorded, but data on the population by religious denomination were published regularly.

After the revolution the registration of vital statistics was placed under the jurisdiction of the civil authorities. Religious denomination was no longer recorded, but the nationality characteristic appeared in civil records.

The registration forms for births, deaths, marriages and divorces were changed several times during the Soviet period and they frequently differed from one territory to the next, often because of the local authorities. However, great importance was attached to nationality and it was always recorded in primary documents.

Standardization of civil records throughout the whole of the U.S.S.R. was carried out only at the end of the 1970s. Just before the 1979 Census the civil registry program was expanded to include certain demographic and socio-economic characteristics. It has not been altered since then (see Appendix 3).

The compilation of data for the current survey of demographic events was conducted by statisticians up to the end of 1991 as part of a single program for the entire U.S.S.R. Additional schedules were also drawn up for some of the republics.

Prior to 1978, only three of the vital statistics tables contained the nationality characteristic. These produced information on the total number of births in relation to the mother's nationality, including children whose father's nationality differed from the mother's, information on the number of births in relation to the mother's age and nationality, information on the total mortality of children in relation to nationality, including children under one year of age by the nationality of the mother.

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Since 1978 the number of tables that include nationality has increased. The most recent were compiled only around the time of the 1979 and 1989 population Censuses (see Appendix 3).

Up to the end of 1950s the vital statistics records were incomplete. Their quality and extent varied considerably from one territory to the next and presumably from one nationality to another. The results have been published only for certain periods and they are extremely fragmentary.

Since the end of the 1950s systematic information on births and deaths has been available in the archives, and since the end of the 1970s information on marriages and divorces by nationality. There has been no complete systematic official publication of these data. Statistical handbooks of recent years contain some information of this type on the 15 main nationalities of the Union republics (Population of the U.S.S.R. 1989; Demographic Yearbook of the U.S.S.R. 1990).

### **Local Registers ("Household Surveys")**

Household registers, so-called household surveys, are another form of basic population statistics which record the nationality characteristic (ethnic origin). This form of survey was introduced in 1934 and has since been changed very little in content and set of characteristics.

In rural localities a special register is kept for each household (group of people maintaining a common residence and related to each other). In this register each member of the family is listed along with his or her sex, date of birth, nationality, level of education, place of work, occupation, etc. In addition to personal data on each family member, it also contains various characteristics of the operation.

The household registers are renewed once every three years. They are checked every six months (on January 1st and July 1st), at which time all the changes that have taken place in the family such as births, deaths, marriages, divorces, departure of married children from home are added. In practice, however, the changes due to demographic events are most accurately recorded, and the registers do not always reflect the changes in social, economic and other characteristics.

Data from household registers are used by statisticians to calculate the numbers and composition of the rural population by sex and age. The nationality characteristic has not been used.

Similar registers exist in cities as well. Each family is recorded in the "house register." These are practically the same as the "household registers" described above. They are kept by the owners of dwellings and by the local militia. As a rule, they are in worse condition than the household registers of rural areas. They are hardly ever used for statistical purposes, and only sometimes as a basis for ethno-sociological research.

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### **Other Population Surveys Which Include the Nationality Characteristic**

Other sources of information on the national composition of the population include various types of documents (application forms, record cards, etc.) which citizens must fill out in the course of life (in school, when enrolling for specialized and higher education, applying for a job, applying for a card at a science or art library, joining the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R., when staying at a hotel, and so on). In these documents, nationality is recorded from the passport.

These sources of information belong to departmental statistics. Few of these sources are analyzed on a regular basis. Data on the national composition of student bodies, scientific workers, managers of different levels, etc. are obtained on a more or less regular basis from departmental statistics by state authorities. These data are published mainly in specialized statistical handbooks.

Another example of administrative records is the registers kept by health institutions which provide statistics on the sickness rate of the population and the frequency of treatment at medical establishments. For example, a separate register is kept on children. The nationality characteristic is present in these registers, but it is practically never used.

### **Summary**

By the beginning of 1992 a fair amount of socio-demographic information on ethnicity had been collected in the former Soviet Union. We now have fairly long series of demographic indices for a large number of nationalities. These indices make it possible to see the effect of ethnic origin on demographic behaviour, to trace the dynamics of ethnic differentiation of demographic processes, and to evaluate the fertility of the different national groups and territories with multi-ethnic populations.

The U.S.S.R. had a system whereby some of the information obtained through different statistical approaches remained in the hands of statisticians and was placed at the disposal of scientific organizations on request. Some information was published in a limited number of copies and sent out to steady users. In recent years information has been sent to users on diskettes. A limited amount of ethno-demographic information has been published in a large number of copies, some in the official reference material of central or local statistical bodies, some in the official statistics journal "Vestnik statistiki," and some in author's publications (books, articles, etc.).

By these channels the information can be disseminated both in the form of tables of absolute values and in the form of specific statistical indices of various types. Ethno-statistical



information was frequently published only in the form of relative indices, which complicated the analysis and made statistical analysis and data conversion impossible.

We would very much like to continue comparative analysis in the future. For this, we need all the former republics of the Soviet Union to preserve their system of recording and compiling statistical data on the population. So far, the former republics that make up the Commonwealth of Independent States (RSFSR, Ukraine, Byelorussia, Moldavia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tadzhikistan, Turkmenia, Kirghizia, Armenia) have formed the Statistics Committee of CIS. However, it is difficult to foresee how the individual independent states will choose to develop their statistical information system in the years to come.

As for the present, all the national problems of the former U.S.S.R. continue to exist and the study of the ethnic factor has retained its urgency. It can also be used to produce a series of demographic indices for a large number of nationalities. These indices present a picture of the effect of ethnic origin on demographic behaviour. There is a need to study the ethnic aspect of the new social phenomena that have become widespread in recent years, e.g., emigration, the problem of refugees.

We are also faced with the task of rethinking all the past information collected on ethnicity, taking into account the history of the country's development over the past 70 years and recreating as much as possible the true picture of its ethno-demographic history.

## Notes

1. Here and throughout this paper, the names of organizations and establishments are given as they were known during the period in question.
2. Only the last four censuses are fully comparable in terms of borders. The country's borders were altered several times between 1918 and 1945, while the 1920 census was conducted during the Civil War, and covered only a part of the country's territory.
3. The vast diversity of answers that is possible when the principle of naming oneself (self-determination) is applied requires systematization of the initial material. For this purpose, a glossary of nationalities and languages is compiled prior to census-taking. This work is usually conducted by statisticians in cooperation with ethnographers and language specialists. This glossary lists the names of all the nationalities inhabiting the country by their principal name (ethnonym) and by the local everyday names. This glossary, which contains up to several hundred names, is used to draw up the list of the main, generally accepted names of nationalities and languages. It is on the basis of this list that the census material is compiled.

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4. In essence, the term "narodnost" is a synonym for nationality and ethnic group.
5. Since then, the question concerning religious denomination has not been included in Soviet population censuses.
6. Nationality is indicated only in the internal passport; it is not indicated in the foreign passport used by U.S.S.R. citizens when travelling to other countries.
7. Local organs of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

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**List of abbreviations**

**NII TsSU SSSR** - Scientific Research Institute of the Central Statistics Bureau of the U.S.S.R.

**Goskomstat SSSR** - U.S.S.R. State Committee on Statistics

**CIS** - Commonwealth of Independent States

**IISP naseleniya AN SSSR** - U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences Institute for the Study of Social Problems

**NII Goskomstata SSSR** - Statistics Research Institute of the U.S.S.R. State Committee on Statistics (currently NII Goskomstata of Russia or the Russian Federation)



## Appendix 1

### Formulation of Questions Regarding Nationality (Ethnic Origin) and Native Language, and Instructions on how to Respond to them in Population Censuses of Russia and the U.S.S.R.

Year of Census	Formulation of Question and its No. in Questionnaire	Instructions for Answering Questions
<b>NATIONALITY</b>		
1897	--	--
1920	4a. What do you consider your nationality to be?	By nationality, we mean a group of the population united by a common national consciousness; nationality is not to be confused with citizenship
1926	4. National group [narodnost']  For foreigners: Of what country are you a citizen?	The respondent notes the national group to which he belongs. In the cases where the respondent has difficulty in answering this question, preference should be given to the national group of the mother.  Since the purpose of the census is to determine the tribal (ethnic) composition of the population, neither religious denomination, citizenship, nor territorial affiliation to any republic should be given in place of national group in question 4. The answer to the question on national origin does not have to coincide with the one on native language.
1937	3. Nationality	The nationality indicated by the respondent himself is recorded.
1939	7. Nationality	The nationality indicated by the respondent himself is recorded.
1959 and 1970	7. Nationality	The nationality indicated by the respondent himself is recorded.  The nationality of children is determined by the parents. In families where the father and mother belong to different nationalities and have difficulty in determining their children's nationality, the nationality of the mother should be given preference.
1979	7. Nationality  For foreigners: also indicate citizenship	The nationality indicated by the respondent himself is recorded. The nationality of children is determined by the parents. In families where the father and mother belong to different nationalities and have difficulty in determining the nationality of their children, the mother's nationality should be given preference.

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Year of Census	Formulation of Question and its No. in Questionnaire	Instructions for Answering Questions
1989	8. Nationality For foreigners: also indicate citizenship	The nationality indicated by the respondent himself is recorded. The nationality of children is determined by the parents.
<b>MOTHER TONGUE</b>		
1897	12. Mother tongue	The language considered as native by the respondent is given.
1920	4b. Mother tongue	The language spoken by the family of the respondent (or by the mother in multilingual families) is regarded as the mother tongue.
1926	5. Mother tongue	The language in which the respondent is most fluent or usually speaks is given as the mother tongue.
1937	4. Mother tongue	The language considered as native by the respondent himself is given. For preverbal children, the language usually spoken in the family is given as their mother tongue.
1939	8. Mother tongue	<p>The language considered as native by the respondent himself is given as his mother tongue. For preverbal children, the language usually spoken in the family is given as their mother tongue.</p> <p>For deaf mutes, the language spoken in the family or by persons with whom they spend most of their time is considered to be their mother tongue.</p> <p>The mother tongue may or may not coincide with nationality.</p>
1959	8. Mother tongue	<p>The language considered as native by the respondent himself is given. If the respondent has difficulty in deciding on his mother tongue, the language in which the respondent is most fluent or usually speaks in the family is given.</p> <p>For preverbal children, the language usually spoken in the family is given as their mother tongue.</p> <p>The mother tongue of deaf mutes is considered to be the language in which they read and write, or which is spoken in their family or by persons with whom they spend most of their time.</p> <p>The mother tongue may or may not coincide with nationality.</p>

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Year of Census	Formulation of Question and its No. in Questionnaire	Instructions for Answering Questions
1970 1979 and 1989	8. Mother tongue Also indicate any other language of the peoples of the U.S.S.R. in which you are fluent	<p>The language considered as native by the respondent himself is given as the mother tongue. If the respondent has difficulty in deciding on his mother tongue, the language in which the respondent is most fluent or which he usually speaks in the family should be given as his mother tongue.</p> <p>The mother tongue of preverbal and other underage children is determined by the parents. If the parents have difficulty in determining the mother tongue of a child, the language usually spoken in the family should be given as the mother tongue.</p> <p>The mother tongue of deaf mutes is considered to be the language in which they read and write, or the one spoken in their family or by persons with whom they spend most of their time.</p> <p>The mother tongue may or may not coincide with nationality.</p> <p>After the mother tongue is indicated in the top line by persons fluent in another language of the U.S.S.R. (i.e. able to speak the language fluently), the second language (Russian, Ukrainian, etc.) should be noted on the bottom line. If the respondent is fluent in two or more languages of the U.S.S.R. in addition to his mother tongue, only the language he is most fluent in should be indicated. In the case of persons not fluent in any other language of the U.S.S.R. or preverbal children, the mother tongue should be entered on the top line, and the word "no" on the bottom one.</p>



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## Appendix 2

### Main Combinations of the Nationality Characteristic with Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristics in Post-war Population Censuses of the U.S.S.R. (\*)

Characteristics Combined with the Nationality Characteristic	Percent of Population Included in Compilation			
	1959	1970	1979	1989
1) Sex x native language	100	100	100	100
2) Sex x second language		100	100	100
3) Sex x native language x second language				100
4) Sex x age x native language		100	100	100
5) Sex x age x second language		100	100	100
6) Sex x age	100	100	100	100
7) Sex x age x marital status	100	100	100	100
8) Size of family	5	25	100	100
9) Type of family x number of children		25		
10) Sex of head of family	5			
11) Size of family x age of family head	100			
12) Females x age x marital status x number of children ever born			25	
13) Females x age x marital status x number of children living at the time of the census				25
14) Migration status x place of previous residence x sex x age		25		
15) Sex x migration status x place of birth				100
16) Sex x length of residence x age			25	
17) Sex x age x level of education	100	100	100	100
18) Children of school age x age x type of educational establishment	100			
19) Sex x occupation	100	25	25	25
20) Sex x branch of the national economy (for the employed)			25	25
21) Sex x social group x source of income			25	100

(\*) All tables were compiled for the whole population, the urban population, and for the rural population.

### Appendix 3

#### Program of Elaboration of Data from an Ongoing Survey of the Natural Movement of the Population and Migration, 1988-1989 (\*)

Characteristics with which the Nationality Characteristic is combined	Compilation	
	Annual	During Census Years
1) Number of live births by sex and mother's nationality, with an indication of those with a father of different nationality	+	
2) Number of live births by the order of birth, age and marital status of the mother	+	
3) Number of live births by the order of birth in females distributed by the year of marriage, order of birth and nationality	+	
4) Mortality rate by sex and nationality with an indication of children up to the age of one year	+	
5) Mortality rate by sex, year of birth and nationality	+	
6) Mortality rate by sex, age and nationality	+	
7) Mortality rate of children up to 5 years of age according to sex, age, year of birth and nationality	+	
8) Number of persons married by sex, age, previous marital status and nationality	+	
9) Number of males and females married by nationality and by the number of common children at the time of marriage		+
10) Number of males and females married according to previous marital status, age and nationality of the spouses		+
11) Number of brides and grooms by educational level and nationality		+
12) Number of divorces according to the age of the females and the number of common children		+
13) Number of divorced males and females according to age and nationality (with an indication of divorces involving spouses of the same or different nationality)		+
14) Number of in- and out-migrants by nationality		+

(\*) Program of compilation of data from the current survey of natural movement of population was not always carried out in full.





# **The Meanings and Dimensions of Ethnicity**



# *Ethnicity, the State and Moral Order*<sup>1</sup>

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Jewish settlers attacked and beat Israelis trying to deliver food and medicines to Palestinian children following a raid on Palestinians in which a 13-year-old girl was shot dead (*The Globe and Mail* June 3, 1989, A2: 6).

About the same time an Israeli Rabbi used biblical references to justify the conclusion that spilling non-Jewish blood is a lesser offense than the spilling of Jewish blood. Responding, the Chief Rabbi of Israel proclaimed that all human beings are made in God's image (*New York Times*, June 6, 1989, 5).

About the same time Premier Bourassa declared, "Never before in the history of Quebec has a government suspended fundamental liberties to protect the French language and culture." In contrast, [Provincial] Chief Justice Jules Deschenes stated that Quebec's ethnic protectionism "demonstrates a totalitarian concept of society .... Other societies put the collectivity above the individual ... [but] this conception of society has not yet taken root here even if certain political initiatives seem at times to be courting it dangerously ... " (from Richler 1991, 47-66).

These contradictions can be repeated for innumerable occasions, times, places and peoples. Although rarely discussed directly, they point to a fundamental issue. Like it or not, as it now stands the human experience supports the generalization that ethnicity is an intervening factor affecting moral judgements. And so the question emerges. Given what we know about humans and their profound identification and enculturation into ethnic groups, is it possible to create and sustain a universal moral order based on claims of common humanity? Or is morality, at least to a very important extent, an integral product of tradition, tribe, society and ultimately the nation state, to be practised first and foremost within the ethnic unit in which the edicts evolved? Indeed, given the observations of generations of anthropologists, is it not sadly correct to conclude that morality is a cultural tool whose primary role is that of fostering and protecting ethnic survival? In effect, are there not scientific grounds for laying aside idealistic but unreal claims about moral universals in view of what we know about cultural relativism – that authenticity comes out of the particularism of specific streams of human adaptation, developed to guide real people in very complex real world places.

It's an old question, but still very much with us. Dramatic, intense with passion, violence and suffering, even horror, for those caught up in its rushing currents. Some see glory in it. A melding of the self into the shaping and flow of historic forces that speak of victory over enemies and/or promise justice and advancement for themselves and "their people". Others see the conflict as irrational: a cruel illogic in which they must suffer for stigmata whose meanings



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foretell lives long on vulnerability, short on power. Whether it is in the Near East or Yugoslavia or wherever, recent accounts (e.g., Shipler 1985; Emerson 1991; Denich 1991) show how ethnic conflict produces only losers. In state-supported ethnic oppression and counter-rebellion, these authors argue, no one, no group, no individual wins or can win. And yet the forces involved and the stakes at risk are so deeply felt, so much a major feature of life, that the interethnic conflict becomes part of the culture, almost normalcy for the groups involved. In many instances, in the Middle East, in the Punjab, for the Kurds, the Tibetans, the Eritreans, the Irish, the Québécois, the Tamils, the Sudanese, the Serbians, many in Corsica, Basques in Spain, to name only a few, the price is often high in human suffering and sacrifice but for those involved, often the vast majority, the goals are worth it. So the struggle goes on.

Scholarship is ambivalent. At one time or another writings on the state and ethnicity have taken each side of the argument, claiming that particularism is both superior and an advance on universalism and vice versa, that universalism is the way forward to human progress, the march of history towards human betterment. Each viewpoint then sees or acts as if the other is regressive, reactionary or backward. In what follows I wish to examine this issue first by looking back to ethnicity and state origins and then by an analysis of both universalism and particularism in the modern state. After that, I shall examine where I think the state as form and practice is going and suggest how the future may, if we are lucky, absorb the best of the past — leaving our mistakes behind.

### **Ethnicity and state origins**

In anthropological terms, using comparative and long-term perspectives, multiethnicity and statehood are two sides of the same coin. The evolution of centralized political systems starts with chieftaincy, in which centralized institutions are weak and deal for the most part with relations to outsiders, along with some mediation of internal disputes. Alien individuals and groups are rapidly incorporated, often in one or two generations, through cultural assimilation. At the same time, chiefly power is contained within its Malthusian nemesis. As group size increases and per-capita relation to vital resources decreases, factional disputes over leadership and access to resources increase, making group fission normal and frequent. In some cases (e.g., Azande), fission is made into a constitutional rule with the chief's heirs expanding their inherited piece of territory during and after their father's death. The emergence of the state is signalled when the state evolves compensatory mechanisms to contain this enervating feature. This is associated with a more permanent bureaucracy, a vast increase in military capability and a capital citadel that serves as a center for trade and administration with a political sector living on revenue collections from its own people as well as tributes and booty from less powerful neighbors (Cohen 1991). And once it appears, the state quickly became the most powerful organization in human history, displacing, conquering and incorporating all previous political systems (Cohen 1977; 1978; 1978b; 1981).

Early states were characteristically multiethnic. Once the centralized state emerges with authority to mediate disputes between groups as well as individuals within its polity, along with the power to demand revenues and militia from its subject groups, pluralism or increased multiethnicity becomes one of its most common features. In a few cases, notably the Inca, cultural assimilation was state policy (Toland 1988) and uniethnic states like Japan and Hawaii are not unknown. But such cases are rare and often geographically isolated compared to the many instances of recorded early state formations that emerged on the larger land masses around the world (Claessen and Skalnik 1981). Conversely, fission, the ubiquitous hallmark of prestate political processes, decreased very significantly. Correlatively, multiethnicity was the easiest means at hand for expanding state power through numbers of supporters, given the importance of military conquest and foreign trade.

But there are multiple pathways to statehood and within it ethnicity plays a varied role. In many, probably the majority, of instances the emergent state is composed of numerous ethnic groups variably related to one another but invariably ranked. This generally means a plethora of culturally distinct local groups under dominant royals and nobles – more and less culturally different in control of the central government from a citadel capital town. In others, states emerge from hostilities between ethnic groups and surrounding polities. In such instances claims of common ethnicity are used to mobilize previously autonomous groups under a unified leadership. As with all states, this step creates expansionist potential under the newly emergent centralized government. In effect, state centralization and its attendant political order occur through the dominance of one ethnic group among a competing set, creating a plural polity from the beginning. And for the most part, rank differences often correlated with ecological and occupational differentiation work to sustain ethnic distinctions for long periods. Less often, and usually at the borders, a single ethnic prestate group unifies under a leader and his followers to defy more powerful centralized neighbors rather than running away or being absorbed by one or several of them (Cohen 1977; 1978a; 1978b; 1981).

Possibly the most important feature of multiethnicity is the emergence of new criteria for membership in the polity. Unlike all previous formations the state differentiates the role of citizen and/or subject, making for a quantum leap in mobilizing capacity, revenues and territorial control. Hammurabi's regime promised a common rule of just laws to legitimate conquest and the incorporation of adjacent polities and ethnic groups (Yoffee 1988). The ancient Egyptians used conquered ethnic groups and multiethnic slave groups to build their monuments and early states used multiethnic subordination to create and maintain massive and frequent military campaigns (Smaldone 1977; Ferguson 1984; Cohen 1986; 1991). The capacity to deal with pluralism and to institutionalize ways and means of minimizing fission through authoritative dispute settlement enhanced the adaptive capacity of centralization, increasing its power many times over. In effect, for the first time in history, with the emergence of the state cultural pluralism varies independently of political membership. The members may be either citizens or servile non-citizens in their relation to central and local authority and they may be ethnically



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the same or different. Historically then, the state is the first organizational form in human evolutionary history to incorporate the capacity for the everyday management and mobilization of plural societies. The payoff in potentially enhanced power is infinitely greater than any previous form of political system.

People are strength. They produce more goods, more revenues, more soldiers and thus more power. The emergence of the state allows for ethnic group enclaves to reproduce their heritable culture within the polity while assimilating slowly. They also make available their own traditions, technology and socio-political alliances as variants for selection and retention by the more polyglot whole, thereby creating a polity and society characterized by hybrid vigor, albeit potentially more conflictful. In the prestate era people from elsewhere were most often added as individuals or, at most, as families. In contrast, the state enables the incorporation of culturally distinct populations – an enormous leap forward in the capacity of political systems to increase control over people, territories, resources and trade routes, with bigger, better and more organized armies that carried out campaigns on an almost annual basis (Cohen 1986; 1991). People, whatever their culture, were its military fodder and its source of revenue for rulers whose differentiated sumptuary life style depended on their ability to exact resources in land, labor, production and trade.

The main point, however, is clear. In evolutionary terms the state is a social formation whose emergence signals the capacity to organize a plural society by differentiating political obligations from cultural heritage. Not all states used this potential. Most did. Especially those that came to dominate in their area of continental land masses or nearby islands. It was a major step forward in social evolution, yet one often overlooked. In any event, it is important to be clear about it. Compared with all other forms of human political organization, and predominantly within its own category, statehood is correlated with multiculturalism. In comparative and historical perspective uniethnic states are the exception not the rule.

### **Universalism and the state**

Given the stimulus of multiculturalism and its organizational capacity for an immense leap in power, the state soon became the dominant political form in the world. Within three to four millenia after its earliest appearance, the state in one form or another claimed hegemony over the entire population of the world. Non-states became parts of larger state systems with more and less degrees of absorption into the ethnizing processes of the state as it struggled towards a more unified culture under the leadership of its dominant ethnic or clan grouping. On the other hand, this process is never complete. Migrations, varying degrees of assimilability and the emergence of new ethnic units from segments of older ones, such as clan groupings or embattled and dispossessed subunits emerging as new ethnic units (e.g., "Palestinians"), ensure that pluralism and statehood remain correlated. And almost from the beginning successful states – Egypt, Alexandrian Greece, the Mongols, China, Inca, Aztec, Borno, Ghana, the Islamic



caliphates or that of Rome were seriously expansionist. The search was for power; control over local peoples, access to trade routes and resources both inside and even further afield. So even while the state, once it emerges, immediately exerts selective pressure for the emergence of a common ethnicity, its expansion, as well as in-migration and distinct ecological adaptations (e.g., nomadic peoples within the state), sustain and introduce multiethnicity, constantly rejuvenating its pluralism.

So far so good. What I have argued above follows from my previous writings. And with a few notable exceptions (e.g., Southall 1991) these points are now generally accepted by anthropologists and others interested in the evolution of the state. What comes next is logical but less widely discussed as part of the same process. Given the emergent authority of the state over a multiethnic society, then statehood as a political formation exerts consistent selective pressure for the emergence of supra-ethnic belief systems, i.e. ideology, morality, religion and science. In effect, this means that a multiethnic state society develops rules of action, morality and law that apply enforcibly to all members of the polity. Out of the Mediterranean area especially, but present as well in state systems throughout the world, there has emerged pan-ethnic rules governing the lives of citizens. From Hammurabi's code, to Maliki law in the Islamic world, and to Roman law in early Europe, to modern constitutions and the idea of a rule of law, once a multiethnic nation state is set into being, ideological and moral correlates follow.

To legitimize state power beyond ethnic boundaries means that religion shifts from ethnic-based to authoritative pan-ethnic Gods and mythologized founders whose supernatural power supports and justifies the living pan-ethnic political order (Cohen 1988). The state thus selects for universal pan-ethnic moral rules fostered by supernatural forces that transcend tribe. Both the state and its supernatural legitimizers are seen as caring about the rectitude of species-wide or universalistic rules of order. Claims to rights and justice are transferred from ethnic group identity to political membership based instead upon citizenship and ultimately upon a common humanity, accorded to all people as "children of God(s)" (i.e. legitimized and fostered by universal religion and its moral teachings). In evolutionary terms the prestate moral universe is closely correlated with ethnicity. Statehood lays the basis for expanding this universe to other groups and, ultimately, to all fellow humans. These new rules may not apply, at first, to all comers, but clearly they signal a feature of political culture fostered by this new structure. The multiethnic state selects for universally applicable moral rules under the legitimizing authority of beings and forces beyond human control which demand compliance by all members (citizens and later all humans) to their prescriptions.

A negative case clarifies the point. One of the earliest known examples of this universalism was the law code of Hammurabi. Written on stelae (stone columns) for newly conquered city-states, it was a proclamation to citizen-subjects that despite their loss of autonomy and their non-indigenous membership in Hammurabi's native city-state, they could expect justice and the rule of law under the authority of their new rulers. Unfortunately, the administrators and soldiers

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put in place to carry out the law were corrupt plunderers and the multisite/multiethnic state did not survive the resulting rebelliousness of its downtrodden peripheries. Hammurabi's code was a model of universalistic rules of conduct, laws and legitimacy (Yoffee 1988). Although Hammurabi's regime was unable to practise his code, it is clear his concept of universally applicable laws justly administered was a strategy for legitimizing state expansionism.

In the West traditions of cultural superiority by the Romans and the need for administrative comparability throughout the empire stimulated a universally applicable set of laws, governmental structures, roads and even language. Ultimately, after the fall of the Empire, a new and strongly universalist religion arose from the millenarianism of a conquered ethnic group. As in all such cases, its theology centered on the moral duties and rights of humanity as a whole, not just the tribe out of which it sprang.

The emergence of the state is also correlated with a quantum leap in technology. Constant or at least seasonal warfare, large monuments, walled cities, transportation and trade, the need for food surpluses for urban markets and the redistributive capability through storage capacities all exerted selective pressure on innovation and retention of new more efficient technologies. All human cultures have traditions of supernatural and natural causation but with the state and its emphasis on universal, pan-ethnic rules interacting with a constant pressure for enhanced technology, there is an accompanying selective pressure exerted to differentiate out specialized activities, roles and institutions devoted more fully to the investigation of technology. The species characteristic *par excellence* of seeking cause-effect relations through abstraction (comparing experiences for similarities and differences so that antecedent-consequent correlations can be inferred) becomes a major resource. As such it starts to differentiate out from its wider social and cultural (usually medico-religious) contexts. The result was to increase human power to produce, trade and most importantly – to subdue. Together with writing and the accumulation of knowledge-claims in libraries associated with religious (i.e. moral) experts and practioners, the door opened on our modern scientific conceptualization of the world and of a pan-ethnic community of workers occupied within research traditions.

This was aided by a lingua franca (Church Latin, Arabic or Chinese), by printing, by monastic orders and royal or governmental favors, all of which made a small but important band of men of research known to one another across ethnic and even state, and sometimes civilizational, boundaries. In the West the most immediate protection was through the "universal" Church, i.e. pan-ethnic Christendom. Law, supernatural sanction, semi-separate institutions and traditions of scholarship joined religion to both universal morality and the accumulation of research based knowledge-claims, especially in Europe. In both Europe and elsewhere it helped states meet their immediate needs. Add to this the constant importance of warfare in the early state and its need for technological innovations becomes clear. The state supports science and technology in its own interests, all within a pan-ethnic cultural setting stressing universalistic morality.



Almost all of the great medieval thinkers, Augustine, Bodin, Vico, Confucius, Ibn Khaldun and many in the Renaissance (e.g., Descartes, Spinoza) sought out universalist logics and understandings. Their epistemology and schemes of morality and government were meant to be species-wide, or at the very least relevant to their own multi-ethnic civilization, to Christendom, Islam or to Buddhism.

Possibly the zenith of universalist writings, approaches and enthusiasm occurs in the eighteenth century. Whether they were defending an older monarchical order or pointing the way to a new one, Enlightenment writers argued that there were rational reasons for differences in social rank, for state power and for equality before the law (Manacas 1988). The state, and the underlying causes of human progress, stem from humankind's common humanity in the same physical world and the need to agree on public order to constrain naturally selfish passions (Hirschman 1977). Writers and thinkers created contractarian logics to derive universally applicable moral rules for society, government, commerce, the family and so on. These, they argued, reflect universal principles of natural law, rights and duties discoverable through philosophical deduction. As all humans are members of the same species, then principles of natural law, of the human condition and of citizenship should, when scientifically uncovered, be applicable equally to all humankind. Humboldt (Meineke 1976, 43), a German philosopher living in Paris at the end of the eighteenth century, called for a comparative anthropology of various ways of life. Such a scholarly tradition would, he claimed, reveal the general laws governing history, culture and, above all, universally applicable morality. The science so founded would then extract the highest and most worthy among human values and cultures and apply them to the advancement of humanity as a whole. In England, Thomas Carlyle (1837; 1987) argued that ethnic and rank differences were superficial outward appearances – cultural clothing covering up underlying universals. Like the commonality of the human physique, these universals must be sought and made into the true guiding principles of humankind's social, political and economic behavior. This was followed ultimately by the nineteenth-century founders of social science Comte, Morgan, Spencer, Tylor, Durkheim and Maine, to mention only a few.

On this point Marx went much further. In reaction to the particularism of his day, especially in Germany, he joined universalist thought with ideology and a political program. For Marx and many of his followers, ethnicity was a superficial property. A mystified category obscuring inequality and the universal causal processes of history – the class struggles between rulers and ruled representing owners and workers for control of the means and fruits of production. Programmatically, working people of the world must be made to understand their common predicament. From that point on, ethnicity would fade or take its "true" place. Each local "nationality" could then be appreciated by everyone, ethnic member and non-member alike, for its authentic artistic and historic value. Within this utopian vision, citizenship and ethnic-national conflicts dwindle as humanity achieves classless nirvana, ending the egregious greed and individualism of capitalism and its instrument of exploitative control, the state. Instead



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individual humans must be educated to seek the collective good (not just for their own group but for humankind as a whole) as the means to their personal satisfactions (Pearson 1990).

Among non-Marxists universalist logic was similar. Humanity and God are one. The moral universe does not end at the ethnic boundaries. Cultural and national differences mask a single, common trajectory of human progress. Rules governing its development and guiding its moral order apply equally across cultures under a universal deity concerned with the world as a whole. From the Enlightenment forward the notion of a common condition for all humankind and its particular historic pathways permeated social thought. And these common conditions were seen to be objective and scientifically knowable. Underlying the entire human experience are "natural", i.e. measurable, trends and outcomes along with their discoverable causes and effects. In Liebnizian fashion, particular settings, peoples, states, ethnic groups or classes, organizations and so on are examples of these universal processes. Ethnic peculiarities are merely superficial distinctions which hide the common features of pan-ethnic human experience, rights, duties and mechanistic "hidden" processes of cause and effect that generate both multiculturalism and the state (Bellah 1991, 14). It is our responsibility to discover these natural phenomena and then to use this knowledge to change things. In effect human progress was seen as dependent upon discoverable laws governing economics, politics, society and culture. It remained only to work out the details.

It is important to understand that this paradigm is woven deeply into the traditions and religious-moral beliefs of our Western cultures. In Christendom and the European successor states to Rome and the Holy Roman Empire, ethnicity and the state were viewed as stepping stones on the way to an orderly and controllable pan-human world order. One species, one set of needs and an evolving means of recognizing the universal causes and rules that must be discovered and then manipulated to achieve a common human welfare. And that welfare reflects a universal moral order under the final authority of a unified and universal God, Church and science. Ethnicity and modern states are thus staging points on the way to emancipation for all peoples. An emancipation that depends upon the emergence and acceptance of cross-culturally applicable laws of (unilineal and non-Darwinian) development, including morality and, hence, "progress".

### **Particularism and the ethnic state**

Fortunately or unfortunately, depending on your viewpoint, recent events indicate that ethnicity can not be dismissed as some kind of retrograde obstruction or the reflection of a "deeper" reality such as inequality and the class struggle. Rather, it seems to be a phenomenon, like many others, inherent in the human experience. Marx was wrong. We don't progress beyond it, we can't move forward without it.

Elsewhere (Cohen 1978a) I have analyzed ethnicity and its determinants into a set of we/they distinctions and triggering devices having both subjective and objectively derived referents.

Whether self-defined, attributed by others or combinations of each of these usually descent-based markers constitute a process of ethnic identifications dependent upon real world causes. The most widespread of these triggers is the we/they situation in which the we is defined by the presence of non-we – the Other(s). Thus, X is an American in Paris, an Italian in Houston and a Texan in New York. Other triggers or markers include a real or putative common historical experience that provides a sense of shared fate, leaders who aggregate ethnic constituencies using ethnic loyalties and fears to mobilize supporters, a common language, religion, territory, a restricted set of occupations, physical appearance and greater or lesser than chance identity-based access to scarce resources. The determinative effect of each marker varies over time. The greater the correlation among them, the greater is the boundedness or dividing lines and the social distance between ethnic groups. The descent basis reflects the fact that ethnicity is generally acquired by birth into an ethnically homogeneous household. Marriages are governed by ethnic boundaries, making interethnic unions far rarer than could occur by chance.

I also noted (ibid.) that over time the plural state is an ethnic-creating unit. Given time, a robust state has the capacity to induce a common we-feeling, a common language or a lingua franca, educational system, a common set of laws reflecting state-wide morality and patriotism. Indicators include increased interethnic marriages among citizens, common loyalties to leaders and recognition by outsiders as an ethnic group identifiably associated with a state. In this sense the state levels out cultural differences over time. Twelfth century England was plural after the conquest, as was Christian Europe. Local and stratified ethnic groups were coalescing into states under monarchs who ultimately succeeded in unifying centrifugal, often multiethnic, populations. In England by Elizabethan times internal differences between Anglo-Saxons and Normans, less so with peripheral Celts, were considered minor in the face of the centralized monarchy and its growing power to unify administration. Religion had been nationalized (for Protestant Europe) under the state and even in Catholic Europe there was national competition for control of the Church (leading to a Pope in Avignon rather than Rome). The Bible was translated and printed in local nation state languages, reflecting the growing autonomy of emergent states as political actors rather than as segments of universalist Christendom under weak feudal monarchs. Trade and commerce were developing on a nation-state basis especially with the inception of the royally chartered trading company as a major precursor to the modern business corporation (Vetica 1991).

And the process is a continuing one even in contemporary times. Although the U.S.A. began as a plural society, and still is, there is an identifiable American ethnicity expressing the emergent populist culture of the Republic (Lipset 1990). The levelling process varies with the degree of protection and political expression given to ethnicity. The French of Canada differ from their antecedents in France and assimilated relatives in the U.S.A. In what was the U.S.S.R. governments followed the Marxist-Leninist theory of state and ethnicity that predicted the end of ethnic rivalries and conflict in a socialist environment in which the state protects peace and equality among ethnic groups. Meanwhile, local Republics were set up to reflect and



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nourish dominant local cultural differences. Ethnicity could be expressed politically as long as it did not challenge revolutionary (i.e. central government) authority or represent "class" differences. In this way ancient roots, territoriality and the cultural adaptation correlated with it could be continued, indeed protected, under the guidance of the Soviet empire. But, in the U.S.S.R., Yugoslavia, Ceylon and Iraq, to mention only a few, events have disconfirmed the theory. In each of these cases ethnic continuity has meant perpetuation of a deep-seated sense of threat or unrequited injustice, interpreted and reproduced as part of ethnic group identity. Thus in Yugoslavia 50-year-old massacres survived as local traditions and have been resuscitated artistically and in the mass media as strong influences on recent ethnic conflict (Denich 1991). (Unpunished crimes from one point of view, fear of revenge from another, both by descendants, not the actual victims or perpetrators.) Put together with ancient differences and moral boundaries triggered by religion, the Marxist conception of ethnicity was blind to the potential explosiveness of ethnic antagonism. As theory and then praxis it downgraded a descent-based ideology. Leninism constrained its destructiveness with state power. Underneath this diaphanous coverlet the real world seethed with traditional antagonisms and a newer fear and repugnance: the undemocratic attempt to foist a single culture – Russian – on the republics. But Marxist theory plus Russian dominance turned into state ethnic policy could not cope with an unseen nemesis – that of traditional ethnic loyalty and conflict once the constraining hand of Soviet state authority was removed.

But there are much deeper roots to the problem. European perception of concomitance between ethnicity and the state has been one of history's more serious mistakes. As we have noted, statehood is inherently multiethnic. Ethnic homogeneity within autonomous states is a rarity. Most states are and always have been plural; increasingly so through time. As the world's state system evolved, the total number of states has decreased logarithmically while unit size has increased (Carneiro 1978). This means that multiethnicity per state has increased in probability terms over the period from early states to the present. Statistical data certainly support this generalization for contemporary times.<sup>2</sup> What makes this point important, however, is the deep-rooted European belief that states are or somehow ought to be correlated with uniethnicity. While there may be some states that have a single or highly predominant ethnic group (e.g., Japan), the generalization reflects a cultural orientation rather than any valid statement about the real world.

Possibly the most well-articulated analysis of this position is that of Meineke (1976). Writing at the turn of the century, he summarizes ideas about the ethnic state, first theoretically, then historically, from the late eighteenth to the end of the nineteenth century. In so doing he contrasts "cosmopolitanism" or universalism on the one hand with its theoretically progressive successor, the nation state. For Meineke the state evolves and is established to protect and express the particularism of an ethnic group whose common language and culture must be expressed and protected by the power of the state. Once achieved, such a state contributes to humanity's progress by turning ethnicity into a political actor on the world's stage, using its



particular culture as the basic character of the state's personalized interaction and competition in the international arena. In this sense the historic and evolutionary function of the state is to sustain uniethnicity, not promulgate or utilize multiethnicity or "cosmopolitanism". Universalism is a precursor, a necessary first step, but evolution and history demand that it give way to its more "advanced" form, that of ethnic statehood.

Cosmopolitanism – multiethnicity under universal rules – was theorized to corrode the source of the state's unique strength. That strength was a direct function of the preservation of its contemporary character and population in terms of its origins in an unadulterated uniethnic past. Distilling this thesis from a series of German thinkers from the 1790s to the late nineteenth century, Meineke sees a common thread which he turns into a general theory of history. For him human progress is completely dependent on a world made up of ethnic states. The reverse idea, fostered by the Enlightenment, was that humans operate in accordance with a set of basic natural rights and precepts leading to a social contract and a set of universal rules governing all states in both their internal and external relations. In other words, progress was based on how people as members of a common species are treated and treat others, not upon their ethnic identity. This he found much too overgeneral, reactionary and unacceptable. For him and a long list of other writers and political actors that he discusses, universal principles of morality and order provide very poor guidelines for adaptation and most importantly for competition, in a world of scarcity and conflict in which each ethnic group must win or lose in a struggle to survive. They may serve as an overall framework, general rules within which specific adaptations occur, but they lack sufficient detail to cope with real world problems to be found in everyday life within a specific society or in the unruly cut-throat world of interstate and interethnic conflict and competition. These more detailed and specific guides are, however, always present in the moral and cultural adaptations to be found in the long-term rootedness of particular ethnic traditions. In more general evolutionary terms, it is this feature, ethnic statehood, he believes, that provides the variety upon which natural selection operates. For the particularists humanity is made up of species-like cultures, each of which competes for survival in a scarcity-ridden, unforgiving jungle. Only the very best, the strongest, survive. And these, the victors, provide cultural models for the losers whose own ethnicity is overcome as they take on that of the winners. ("Deutschland uber alles," if you will.) Evolution in this sense is a form of simplistic and brutal Cultural Darwinism. And in order for this natural process to work at its most logical and accelerated form, each ethnic unit must become a state on its own in a Hobbesian world of nation-state competition. This gives nature and history the chance to choose the best in humanity's varied socio-cultural experience, discarding inferior varieties, ensuring progress for the species as a whole. Every ethnic group has, therefore, the right and the obligation to use the power of the state to express and preserve its authenticity and to make sure that this is not watered down by a liberalized cosmopolitanism.

For particularist ideology overreliance on universal rules and multiethnic political units are dangerous invitations to ethnic extinction. On the other hand they view their own reified

conception of ethnicity as the fundamental source of humanity's adaptive capacities. For holders of this view my definition of ethnicity as process — expandable and contractable by sets of identities triggered by events and loyalties — is a deeply flawed defamation of the true nature and utility of ethnicity. For them it is best viewed in terms of a collective character and personality. Each immutable ethnic entity is seen to possess its own strengths and weaknesses of character and manners, which help or hinder it to compete. As an actor, however, its collective personality is expressed through statehood. This empowers its capacity to compete and to survive. To muddy this process through idealizing or legitimizing ethnic pluralism, cosmopolitanism, intermarriage or the fostering of multicultural rights within the state is to work against natural processes of evolution, history and progress. Using this logic, the end goal of all culture is the ethnic state. And once it emerges, it and only it can and should be the primary source of inspiration and identity for the development of a particular ethnic group. Fichte (in Mienieke 1976) writing at the beginning of the nineteenth century convinced a wide audience that ethnicity alone and uncontaminated provides the truly authentic basis and inspiration for statehood. In this view the state is not a rational contract and a negotiated constitution based on a set of universal rights and duties common to "all men". It is instead the penultimate and natural expression of a single culture. Universal ideas about human rights, about property or the rule of law can certainly be a framework for its rational beginnings. But its character, its prospects and its competitiveness lie in its ethnic character and its capacity to reproduce and maintain the idealized entity or the purity (i.e. true identity and character) of its historic roots through political power. As Fichte (ibid., 42) noted, "Every state is deeply ailing in which political organization does not coincide with the national spirit". (i.e. with its uniethnic roots and their preservation and protection through the use of state power). Or as another writer put it, nationality, i.e. ethnicity, is the life-principle of the state (ibid., 111). To have a citizenry that separates its private from its civil life in terms of the deepest sense of membership, morality, religion or cultural unity is to serve two masters (ibid.). The state being the political expression of ethnicity cannot represent multiethnicity without undoing its *raison d'être*.

In sum, the state is and should be the expression of ideologically reified ethnicity. Law and morality are rooted within a general framework of universalism, i.e. Christendom for Europe, Shintoism for Japan, Judaism for Israel or Shiite Islam for Iran. But the specifics that make it into a practicable and competitive set of guidelines come from its ethnic roots as these evolved within the localized unilingual "national" culture. In sharp contrast there is life and death competition in the international environment; no law, no morality, only decline or expansion, i.e. conversion of other ethnicities to one's own through conquest, imitation and diffusion. Military strength is a *sine qua non* in such a world, as is export trade and expanding spheres of political, economic and cultural influence beyond the uniethnic state borders. Within the state multiethnicity corrodes and weakens the virility and creative energy of mythically assumed uniethnic roots. The claim of those from elsewhere that they can be both citizens and non-indigenous in at least part of their culture, i.e. their own roots are viewed as spurious. Like Shylock they are astride more than one moral universe: inside for some functions, outside for



others. (Importantly, to create a morally and artistically satisfying denouement, Shakespeare had Shylock forcibly converted to Christianity.) To protect its survival value in a world of Cultural Darwinism an ethnic group must become sovereign. Only then can it protect itself vigorously, even ruthlessly, against a cosmopolitanism that enervates its "national spirit".

Hitler did not invent Naziism, he merely cut the cord that joined cultural nationalism to its universalist antecedents in order to explain Germany's defeat and the only way forward to its destiny as a great nation. Earlier writers had accepted much of the universalist moral principles expressed in the French revolutionary doctrines of 1793. But they added the romantic notion that ethnic-group peculiarities were humankind's historical experiments with ways of actualizing these universal but abstract and overgeneralized principles within real world societies among the hurly-burly conditions of international and interethnic competition. Naziism abandoned and ultimately suppressed universal moral principles and "natural rights" by blasting ethnicity into position as the highest value and single most important determinant of national success or failure. Ethnicity and its continuity with the past in purified (Aryan) form must trump all other values and rights. When indigenous ethnicity is endangered from without by other nations or by non-Germans within, all universalist moral rules must be set aside. Instead people must "think with their blood", i.e. ethnicity and its presumed welfare dictate moral and political rationality.

By the end of the century economic forces and the general expansion of Europe into the Third World were interpreted and justified by this same argument. The "civilizing" mission became the validation of European ethnic competition and superiority. Using this same language of justification it also explained to the actors themselves the absolute necessity to scramble for colonies. In the theory of ethnic statehood adoption of metropole culture by "inferior races" validates the historic success and superiority of metropole ethnicity. Lord Lugard and his wife Flora Shaw campaigned in England for rapid colonization of Africa under English rather than French, Belgian, German or Portuguese tutelage on three counts. First, it was their moral duty to do so. Just as Rome brought civilization to Britain centuries ago, now Britain must do the same for the uncivilized peoples of Africa. Secondly, if Africa was to be controlled by Europe, why not by the best that Europe had to offer, the British, and their field-tested understanding and practice of constitutional government. And thirdly, if England did not join the competition, it and its own ethnic project would lose the economic benefits and, even more importantly, the international contest for ethnic fitness provided by colonialism.

## **Results**

The results of Europe's development of cultural nationalism are well-known. In the nineteenth century it was the argument used to unify Germany and Italy, to expand colonialism and to create inter-European competition and conflict. That wasn't new. European states were seen as political actors with essentially uniethnic populations, French, British, German, Italian and



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so on. Never mind that France had several indigenous languages, that Britain had a rebellious Celtic fringe, that Germany had deep internal divisions between Prussia and the rest of the new nation, that Belgium, Holland, Austria and Switzerland were acknowledgedly multiethnic. European nationalism had a strong sense of uniethnicity and personality per nation-state, defying the empirical facts and fostering Cultural Darwinism. Under such misguided assumptions, European racism leading to variably oppressive overseas regimes and to Naziism at home, although tragic and morally reprehensible, was in fact quite logical. The Nazi ideology was only the worst of many, all of which spawned a super-heated ethnocentrism that was intoxicating, passionate and in the end, draconian. If ethnicity is the root of sustainable progress, then logically *les autres*, the Other or the non-German, is the obstacle and the threat, placed by history beyond the borders of the moral universe, i.e. outside the realm of moral consideration. Paradoxically yet understandably, given the widespread romanticism of a uniethnic basis for statehood and a belief that ethnic survival depends upon the founding and flourishing of an ethnic state, the same historical misinterpretation also helped foster Zionism or cultural nationalism for Jews, leading to the steady growth of Jews in the Near Eastern population and the eventual founding of the state of Israel.<sup>3</sup>

Given a lack of realism in the ideology of cultural nationalism, it is not surprising that multiethnicity expanded in the twentieth century. Where colonial expansion would plant a mother ethnicity among the "less civilized" its brief intrusion led simply to an expanded array of new multiethnic states on the world's stage. At the same time the older European states and their outlying seedlings in the Commonwealth, the U.S.A., Latin America and Asia, plus migrations from poorer areas to the more prosperous nation-states, have, in turn, produced even larger more multiethnic ethnic states. Sweden has its Turkish workers, Holland its Indonesians, Germany has Yugoslavians and Africans, France Algerians and Africans, Britain has immigrant populations from all over the unstable and economically backward corners of its former empire. And Hispanics and Asians are the fastest growing populations in North America.<sup>4</sup>

Granted the state still ethnizes and, contrarily, ethnicity within plural states contains continuities independent of statehood. Blacks from the Caribbean in Canada and the U.K. seem quite different after 20 years compared to their counterparts who went to the U.S.A. But as Bromley (1984) noted, for Ukrainians in the U.S.S.R. and in Canada there are also commonalities.<sup>5</sup>

The main point is worth repeating. The state as a uniethnic unit is a myth. In almost all cases, states are rooted in, and foster or maintain, pluralism. And where homogeneity or ethnic survival is idealized (Japan, Germany, Israel, Quebec, Armenia, Slovenia or Swaziland) cultural differentiation is either present already or inexorably interwoven into the social fabric. In moral terms, and after a century and half of romantic, often bellicose and sometimes horrifying, cultural nationalism, it is only natural that the liberal interpretation of history has swung towards the obligations of democratic states to pluralism. At least this has been the case up to now. But

strangely something new is happening. Something enabling the old myth to play an important part in humanity's next step forward.

### **The weakening of the state**

Just as statehood and imperialist expansionism were reaching their zenith in the twentieth century, the very opposite process was beginning and gathered strength throughout the century. The dangers of interstate competition and conflict signaled by two world wars, the Cold War and "mutual assured destruction" all pointed to the need for some form of emergent international organization and authority. The result has been revolutionary. International law and tribunals are emerging, limitations on how wars are fought, trade agreements, regional cooperation and organization are all part of the history of the twentieth century. Most impressive is the number and variety of multination agreements about human rights. From 1929 to 1980 there were over 30 international codes of human rights signed by regional and world-wide groups of sovereign state governments (Cohen 1993). Each of these declarations (theoretically) committed sovereign state signators to a contract in the international arena which decreased their autonomy. In effect an interstate community is being formed in which each participant must recognize authority outside the state across the entire species. Though not fully recognized as yet, international tribunals that adjudicate such covenants have obviously increased their authority enormously in the latter twentieth century. In the economic sphere, national borders are becoming less significant as transnational corporations, stock markets, currencies and increasing amounts of economic planning move outside single states to an interstate environment. Most pressing, the issue of environmental hazards and disease control require international cooperation and compliance with agreed-upon remedies. Human biomass is a single unit in terms of disease vectors. Finally, recent events which are bound to accelerate have found both single nation-states and the U.N. demanding that human rights violations within a particular country be corrected and that the international community has a "right" to override state sovereignty in the cause of human rights. The Kurdish predicament in the Gulf War set a precedent. There is now an activated claim by the U.N. to aid and protect refugees, i.e. human rights within a state. If upheld over time by further precedents, this means, as some have already claimed (Hansen 1993 *L'absence de renseignements fiables*), that bona fide refugees possess rights that supercede nation state sovereignty. It is not insignificant that this case, like other similar ones, e.g., the Armenians in the U.S.S.R., involve ethnic rather than other types of social conflict.

The upshot is that in the real world of the twentieth century the state has been weakened by emergent internationalism. The Hobbesian relations among states assumed by cultural nationalism have been curtailed. More is coming as states converge and liberal democracy expands around the world (Fukuyama 1992). Instead of a misguided Cultural Darwinism, real world developments are shifting unit boundaries. Given the outcomes of cultural nationalism, the suicidal destructiveness of modern warfare and the interdependence of global life forms, it has been necessary to expand our attention to a new unit – to that of humankind as a whole for



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a start, along with the addition, very soon perhaps, of all living matter. In other words, to survival units well beyond ethnic boundaries. In effect, the emergent focus of conscious human interactions is a multistate, multiethnic, even multispecies domain of interdependence.

And as if this weren't enough, the state is also being weakened from within. Statism, the belief that progress and socio-economic stability requires rational planning and detailed guidance from a centralized managerial bureaucracy, is on the decline. Doubtless an important residue of needed regulatory authority will remain. But Hayek's (1944; 1971) life-long critique of the inefficiencies and dangers of overcentralized governmental control of society and economy has proven prophetic. Information loss between real world work places and centralized hierarchical government control centers in statist economies supports maladaptive policies, sycophantic blockage of feedback correctives, injustice, tyranny and ultimate economic and political failure (ibid.). Events in socialist countries and the statist Third World have proven him right (see also Fukuyama 1992). Only enormous numbers of ordinary and experienced individuals processing information about their needs and their participation in the economy, polity and society can make the transactions and exchanges efficient enough to support a prosperous and adaptive state. The contemporary rush to more market-driven economies among previously centralized statist regimes bears out these earlier insights. It also privatizes and disperses central authority.

Democratization and increased local power in the political domain are correlated features. The world-wide democratization movement reflects a desire to have local peoples use information and requirements closer to home, as well as rights empowerments to regulate their everyday lives. As March and Olsen (1989, 126) note, rights-granting provides local groups and institutions with inviolate, albeit interpretable and changing entitlements that are a friction on the power of the state. Country after country has accepted internal demands for multiparty competition at all levels turning many Western predictions on their heads (Fukuyama 1992). In effect, this world-wide movement is shifting political control away from single regime central government, empowering and enhancing local decision-making and moving to protect the rights of minority ethnic and other interest groups to mobilize or bargain for increased power. The process has been occurring in the more developed nations as well. The statism of the 1930s has now been slowed down by a countertrend to increase local government responsibilities. In places as far removed as Nigeria and Florida local governments have seen their 1980s budgets increased through contributions from higher non-local levels and this decentralizing trend is continuing into the 1990s. This is correlated with growing central government deficits and poor performance by many central bureaucracies and parastatals. Interest in local government is also increasing. In the U.S.A. in 1940 only one third of all households were owner-occupied. By 1980 this had changed to two thirds. Thus a majority of the population have their major capital investment affected by decisions of local governments. Meanwhile central governments have been sluffing off social programs to the state and local level. Governments in the capitalist, socialist and third world states are moving to sell off public corporations to the private sector.



And the most statist centrally managed non-market sector in the West, the defense establishment, is weakening under assault from deficit financing and the end of the cold war (Bellah 1991).<sup>6</sup>

In the Scandinavian countries social research and criticism are concerned with widely replicated findings that statism has spawned measurable degrees of personal demoralization. Although Scandinavians revere their advanced social welfare programs, there are costs. Under conditions in which the state does the lion's share of caring about human welfare and suffering, individuals paradoxically become increasingly (with each generation) demoralized and self-serving. Morality comes to be seen more and more as the job of the state. There is measurably less need in civil society to acquire and foster empathy, sympathy or personal involvement in the public good (Wolfe 1989). Divorce, suicide, juvenile indiscipline and immorality and mental health problems are all on a significant upward climb. As Wolfe (1989) points out, the antidote may be for local communities and local neighborhoods to take over more control and responsibility so that each person and family understands the importance of participation in, and the ongoing construction of, the moral life of the community. Localism, plural centers of control and decision-making which accept local differences, more personal and immediate responsibility are now being advocated. In sum, it is as if modern industrial society and its peripheral cadets in the Third World had reached a zenith of state power and control in the mid-twentieth century. In so doing the negative outcomes have started to outweigh the positive achievements. But the internal reaction, that of increased localism and the active dismantling of centralized governmental control along with a world wide movement for increased democratization, means that pluralism is on the rise. Local control requires less standardization and more support for local differentiation. Can the state survive this erosion from without and within? The answers will fill the headlines in the next several decades.

### **Ethnicity and state: the emergent synthesis**

Whatever else is happening, ethnicity is alive and well at the end of the twentieth century (Toland 1988). Although states can and do ethnize their citizenry over time, pressure cooker tactics such as those described for Israel (ibid.) or the U.S.S.R. in its abortive attempt to create "Soviet Man" continue to crash on the unforgiving rocks of entrenched ethnic heritability.<sup>7</sup> Whether states ethnize or not, rapidly or slowly, they do form a primary political arena within which ethnicity operates. And statehood is changing. As we have noted, forces outside and inside the older state are working to weaken its autonomous control over policies and praxis. Such forces represent both the contemporary version of Enlightenment universalism and the particularism of cultural nationalism. What has become clear in recent times is the fact that both universalism and particularism are necessary in a world of increasing complexity, scarcities, specialization and alienation.

Universalism with its threads going back to Rome, to early Christianity, along with many other world religious movements and the eighteenth century Enlightenment are the natural soils out

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of which human rights declarations and actions have developed in our own day.<sup>8</sup> International efforts devoted to environmentalism and world-wide demands for increased democratization are heading in the same direction. All these developments assume universal qualities of human existence. Species-wide rights over particular things, personal security and rightful expectations, procedures and goals can be derived logically. Some, like international disease-monitoring and control, are immediately understandable, others, like the international protection of internal refugees and ethnic minority rights within states, need careful arguments and precedents. In effect this means that important qualities of morality have as their referent the human community as a whole.

Traditionally, the moral order has been an ethnic concern or at most a religious "community". Despite teachings and lip service to notions of universalism, the fullest practice of a moral order has been correlated with ethnic boundaries. Trade always fosters some interethnic moral order and citizenship demands it for obligations owed to the state and its laws. Nevertheless, for much of history and to varying degrees in today's world, obligations of community, of trust, of sharing and a sense of shared fate are possible only within a moral universe defined ethnically. As noted, a limited set of multiethnic moral obligations must exist for economic relations to function, so too with common membership in a polity. But for many peoples around the world the full gamut of moral relations is restricted to family and one's own ethnic group. As the state develops an ethnicity of its own, then patriotism, ethnicity and moral life begin to coalesce.

Universalist theory sees little, if any, place for ethnicity in matters of rights, duties, indeed the entire panoply of moral principles. Marx (1987) writing about the "Jewish Problem" used this argument. Progress, he noted, requires the universalizing and secularization of morality which he felt was impossible without the world-wide victory of communism and the end of traditional religions that separate believers into differentiated moral orders. Today, although Marxism as theory and practice is passing rapidly into history, it is apparent that emergent universal moral rules are growing apace. The world has shrunk and our survival requires that we live by a widening set of species-wide agreements about morality and correlated rules of conduct for individuals and collectivities. Logically and empirically this involves legitimizing supra-state authority, especially when not to do so endangers the global population and its sustaining environment.

On the other hand, and in a more complex fashion, particularism is also finding acceptance. Clearly the weakening of the state has provided an opportunity for cultural nationalism or ethnic statehood to revive all over the world. Universalist principles and their institutionalization increase with the scale and differentiation of human interactions. And a sense of wider membership in the entire species expanding to include all life forms develops as well. Under such circumstances ethnic loyalties make room for common humanity and its emergent demands. But paradoxically, as recent events indicate, there is a correlated increase in particularism as well. As we differentiate into ever more discrete particles of roles, personhood which unifies



and energizes social life has less, not more, room for recognition and some form of legitimized expression.<sup>9</sup> Positivist social science is most aptly directed at institutions, roles, statuses and aggregates of these organizational units. The conception is necessarily mechanistic and analytically limited to carefully excised aspects of human experience deemed important theoretically. But personhood involves vast amounts of sensitivity, of judgments and more or less integrating features for social participation. And all of this is contained within an energized entity – a person – whose continuous spontaneity, both rational and irrational, intentional and unintentional, of reaction to self and others, slips through the grossly overgeneralized universal rules and principles applicable across all ethnic boundaries. And altogether these make up the particular texture and character of individual and group life. Supply and demand curves and other posited and objective determinants of social life really do exist and have effects on these particulars but they cannot provide the details and meanings that actually energize life for persons and groups. The essential core of human activity is a particularistic actor, not a scientifically generalizable and programmable set of predictable role behaviors that model and reflect the human condition. These "scientific" constructions "model" our experience and therefore must perforce leave out enormous amounts of details, especially the way the rules of the game are interpreted and enacted. Outside the unique biological and psychological qualities of the person lie the features they hold in common with others as a matter of birth and rearing. Common roots, language, accent, expectations and vast numbers of common understandings and familiar ways of reacting and acting are reproduced within networks of intermarrying families defined by ethnicity. This means that ethnicity is the naturally occurring tangible social orbit within which personhood is most meaningfully expressed and experienced. And I repeat, innumerable commonalities within ethnic groupings from physical appearance, to a way of moving one's body, to facial expressions, to life styles, child training and attitudes to life, death and achievement may link co-ethnics but often as not are never expressed through easily observed roles, statuses, institutions or easily observed packages of information being transmitted down generations. This does not mean that people are not linked to their wider groupings of religion, citizenship, even their common humanity in tangible objective and measurable ways. But the limited degree of expectations that go with roles and statuses and the universal rules of decency and justice that may apply to them are extraordinarily limited in comparison to the complexities of personhood for which there are no specific roles (i.e. named and/or bundles of activities directed to specifiable goals). Persons as whole entities do not relate to complex modern organizations nor necessarily to other persons.

From this perspective alienation is the socially programmed tension between person and role. And in a world of segmented role play, ethnicity provides the widest sense of descent group solidarity along with myriads of correlated meanings and patterns of behavior that go with it. A telephone operator in New York, Tokyo, London or Nairobi may experience common job stress but as persons they have widely differing interests, obligations, needs and therefore stress reactions. And ethnicity shapes that reaction. More generally, in a world of growing impersonality ethnicity provides an immediate and often unconscious fellowship of identity and



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community. And this is enhanced as the scale and specialization of human actions create shrinking opportunities for an holistic expression of personhood. It is in this sense that ethnicity is the antidote to alienation.

Even more appositely for the 1990s, burgeoning ethnic nationalism – giving political expression to ethnic identity – means that there is a growing and contagious constituency for the we-of-me to be expressed in terms of social formations of authority and power. All over the world the weakening of the state has provided an opportunity for ethnic units to seek political autonomy to foster and sustain the growing significance and importance of this source of comfort and common interests in an increasingly alienating multiethnic state environment. To be engaged by and supportive of cultural nationalism in Quebec or Slovenia or Latvia means that people are passionate in their support of this identity. This is, of course, especially true if ethnicity defines common life chances in a social environment of inequality – which is, unfortunately, far from uncommon. If ethnic identity is at all correlated with access to scarce resources, especially to low access, then it is not surprising that the next step is towards political action and hence to cultural nationalism. Similarly if ethnicity defines selfhood, providing a sense of continuity with past generations so that the self shares in this historic experience, then enhancing its political autonomy and power ensures continuity of the the most pertinent we-of-me beyond the net of kinship. Anyone reading a Quebec license plate – *je me souviens* – understands this immediately. Contrarily, if the state is successfully ethnizing its constituent ethnic and other interest groups, i.e. creating a new state-based identity, then older ethnicities can be predicted to decline in relation to a fellow-feeling with the state as a whole. Nevertheless, there is always some residual utility to the older cultural nationalism. Older adaptations are a storehouse of possible ways of dealing with the problems of modern life. They, therefore, serve as a reservoir of possible solutions to older, newer and emergent problems.

The question I began with must be seen in light of all this. Is a universal moral order possible? Of course the answer is yes. Indeed we need it and probably won't survive without it. Morality restricted parochially whether it be for kith or kin, ethnicity or country has no place in a shrunken interdependent world. On this point, Marx and the Enlightenment writers were right. But the Cultural Darwinists were not entirely wrong, at least as nationalists. We need ethnicity; it fills the gap between programmed existence, between general standards and the rich continuity of human experience provided by culture. But they were wrong, tragically wrong, to believe that culture-ethnicity could trump universal morality emerging from common experience and a finite world that is more a single vessel for its human crew than a fleet of warring cultures only the most powerful and unbridled of which will survive. Only when ethnicity as part of society or as a nationalistic upsurge is framed within this century's most characteristic and notable development – international covenants of universal human rights – only then can it overcome its sphinx, the barbarian at the gate. Thus, the European Community recognized the new ethnic states of Yugoslavia. But only if and to the extent that minority ethnic groups within these new states are guaranteed the rights of all humans. Quebec is a distinct society, possibly a separate

state or an autonomous sub-state in a new Canada. But there can be no special or distinctly Quebec version of human rights, just as there is no distinctly African Peoples Rights (as described in the Banjul Charter 1981) that guarantees statist or collective power because of an assumed ethnic tradition claimed as justification for such particularism (Cohen 1992). Israel's treatment of the Palestinian issue is the measure of its acceptance of twentieth-century norms rather than the cultural nationalism of its origins.

Particularism and universalism are two sides of the same coin, that of humankind's capacity to invent the means for its own survival in both nomothetic and idiographic terms. And our own puny attempts to understand this process must reflect the same kind of bifocal view. There are universal and widely applicable generalizations that can be made about this and other processes. In turn, these can be seen mechanistically as the results of ongoing features that influence their stability and change. But that positivistic project may be hopelessly quixotic in seeking ultimate understanding through incremental refinements of models and theories that are easily and quickly overturned by events. In even more general terms, then, scientific, generalization-seeking solutions must exist alongside the rich depiction of complexity signalled by artistic expression and ethnography and area studies. One seeks a body of valid universals applicable to all human experience, the other seeks to understand the peculiarities of a specific cultural experience or even a small part of it. Although this is another subject, its eclecticism is my particular way of searching for and claiming to have knowledge about problems that defy easy solution. We don't advance either ideologically or epistemologically by changing myopically from universalism to particularism or vice versa either in cultural policy, morality or scholarship, we grow by using both.

## Notes

1. A previous version of this paper was presented at the Center for International Studies Seminar of Peoples and States at M.I.T. in October 1991. The author is grateful to Professor Joshua Cohen of M.I.T. for an excellent critique and to the Seminar and its organizers for the opportunity to present these views. Helpful criticism is also gratefully acknowledged from Shlomo Deshin, Goran Hyden and Frank Kunz. I have tried to incorporate many of the suggestions and to meet the major criticisms, all of which I appreciate. However, in the end, I alone must bear responsibility for the result.
2. Although figures vary over time and surveys are a modern product, a recent one is instructive. Of 132 states studied, only 9 percent were ethnically homogeneous (Walker Connor, cited in Weiner 1991, 7). Another 19 percent had one ethnic group making up over 90 percent of the population while the same proportion (19 percent) had one ethnic group making up over 75 percent of the people. This left 53 percent of the sample with no one group making up more than 75 percent of the country, and of this group a significant



portion (30 percent) had no single named ethnic group containing more than 50 percent of the entire state. Possibly this was less so in the past when states were smaller and transportation and migration less easily available. However, to my knowledge there were no major urban centers in early states without migrants, foreign traders, craftsmen, and even foreign consulates and embassies. Throughout Europe's history, the Church, long distance trade, roads, a universalist past, empires of the past and alliances among states made multiethnicity part and parcel of European society from the early trading cities onwards. In eastern Europe Jews were spread across even the small towns and villages in small or larger quarters (or *shtetels*), giving even the most remote towns an awareness of multiethnicity as part of normal social life even if the Other (Jew, Tinker, Basque, Tamil, Native American) was outside the moral and social, but not political, order of state society.

3. Whatever else it is, and it is many stranded, Zionism is a form of cultural nationalism rooted in the same intellectual culture that held Europe in thrall in the nineteenth century. But cultural national legitimacy required a state or at least a territory or homeland validating ethnic survival. Whether on the right or the left or among Jewish leaders themselves, Lenin's position was accepted. Jewish nationality lacked the necessary ingredients for recognition because they lacked a common language and a traditional and sovereign political territory of their own. More generally throughout Europe they lacked the ingredients for inclusion in the cultural nation unless they were willing to give up their own ethnicity completely and join the universalist moral community of Christendom and the particular local version of it in a local state. Some did. Others did not. And the recalcitrants accepted cultural nationalist theory and founded a social movement devoted to the establishment of a Jewish national state in the biblical homeland. This led, in turn, to today's unresolved conflict between Palestinians and Israelis over claims to indigenesness.
4. See Marsh (1992) who interprets this population movement as the major selective factor causing a resurgence of ethnic nationalism in Europe. Although this reaction has been much highlighted in the news and has surfaced in political debates, there is very little evidence that it has become sufficiently widespread to go beyond a minority of voters and opinion makers. In Toulon the cultural nationalist who argues for the immediate deportation of all "non-French" received 29 percent of the vote in March 1992. Still, it would be naive to discount the capacity of Europe's deeply engrained xenophobia to sprout anew even though my understanding of evolution leads me to believe that natural selection operating at the sociocultural level is shifting and winnowing all of us towards a more universalistic morality.
5. This is meant to be ambiguous. Whether such traits are biologically and/or culturally transmitted or both is a matter for research not opinion. Although I lean strongly in favour of culture, I am aware of the complexities involved that commingle these two sources, given the fact that ethnic groups are also breeding populations (see Boyd and Richardson 1985; Cohen 1991). The notorious aggressiveness and drive for localized political autonomy of



Celtic fringe groups in the British Isles commented upon by observers from Roman times to the present and also claimed to be part of southern "cracker" culture in the U.S.A. may be a form of learning passed from one generation to the next. It may also be a genetic proclivity based on favoured breeding for these traits. Or both of these may be explained by the world-wide correlation of such traits with pastoralism and segmentary lineage systems also found in celtic groups at the peripheries of Roman Britain.

6. In Nigeria, which starved local government for the first two decades of the independence period at about 1.7 to 1.3 percent of federal revenues, contributions to local governments moved up to 10 percent in the 1980s and started the 1990s at 15 percent (Olowu 1992, 22). The same trend is occurring in Florida. Although outside contributions including grants were always larger portions of the federal government revenues, they have increased in the 1980s and this trend is accelerating in the 1990s. In my own town in north central Florida, said to be typical, local revenues have been a falling proportion of budgets throughout the 1980s, with increasing amounts coming from state and federal sources.
7. As late as 1985 and 1986 at least one leading Soviet anthropologist reported that even in the Baltic states a levelling process was taking place that involved significant "Russification" of all local cultures. Challenged by his colleagues, V. Tischkov who espoused this view (at joint meetings of U.S. and Soviet anthropologists on ethnicity) held on to it throughout the conference. Although the topic of "Soviet Man" was carefully skirted by the conference, a number of papers referred to notions of the ethnizing of the state and the levelling of cultural differences under the authority of the state.
8. This purposely omits the relativist position put forward by a number of writers (e.g., Vincent 1984) who accept the African Peoples Charter of Human Rights as evidence that human rights can be more particularistic and relative to non-Western cultural traditions. This position is, in my view, untenable and mischevious in its enablement of governance activities that abrogate individual human rights (Cohen, Hyden and Nagan 1993).
9. Personhood is the whole living human actor accorded the rights given to any individual in a community. Controversy surrounds its limits – somewhere between conception and the second-term fetus in Western culture to begin with, and between brain-dead vegetative states and heart failure on the other. Exact definitions for any particular case are variably determined by social debate, technology and its availability, medical ethics and the force of religious values (Jones 1990). In many cultures tests of survival beyond a certain time period are made to new borns before they are accorded personhood in the community. Death before that time generally implies no proper burial ceremony.

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# *What does Ethnic/Racial Differentiation Mean? Implications for Measurement and Analyses*

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It is a common observation and a continuous research finding that there are significant racial and ethnic differences in patterns of social life in the United States and Canada, as in other pluralistic societies. Indeed, there is hardly a theme of social differentiation that has been studied where racial and ethnic variation is not among the major sources of variation. Even a casual glance at recent research highlights the importance of race and ethnic factors in areas as diverse as marriage, childbearing, migration, aging and death; mental illness and politics; contraceptive usage and housing; educational attainment and morbidity; living arrangements of old and young persons; in their behavioral dimensions as well as in their associated norms, values and attitudes. The question is not whether there are ethnic and racial differences but the contexts in which these differences are sharpened or diminished.

The literature documenting ethnic/racial differences is enormous. For recent summaries, bibliographic guides and data analyses, see the U.S. census volumes by Lieberson and Waters, 1988; Bean and Tienda, 1989; Snipp, 1989; Farley and Allen, 1987; and my review of them (Goldscheider, 1991). I have also found the research and ideas presented in the following particularly helpful: Alba, 1990; Massey, forthcoming; Portes and Rumbaut, 1990; Light and Bonacich, 1988; Waldinger, et al., 1990; Wilson, 1987. On the ethnic connections to family and living arrangements, contraceptive usage and health, see Goldscheider and Goldscheider, 1989; Goldscheider and Mosher, 1991; Goldscheider and Dill, 1991, respectively.

## **Complexities of context and inclusiveness**

There are several sources of complexity in studying the contextual question associated with ethnic/racial differentiation. First, ethnic/racial differences are variable over time, as the distinctiveness of groups changes and as differences among them in some areas of social life narrow or widen. Second, the importance of ethnic and racial differentiation, relative to other characteristics, e.g., education, region or occupation, changes over time as well and may be more pronounced among some social and economic groups. Three, convergences in ethnic/racial differences in some areas of social life do not necessarily imply convergences in all areas. These features suggest that ethnic/racial differentiation may be discontinuous over time and from one social dimension to another. In turn, the similarity among ethnic/racial groups in the past or within one sphere of activity does not necessarily imply continued similarity under all conditions. Thus, the changing contexts of ethnic/racial differences need to

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be explicitly considered. The analysis of ethnic/racial differences obviously requires models that are multivariate to isolate those differences that can be attributed to specific aspects of ethnicity and race and those that only reflect other characteristics of ethnic/racial groups. Our models should also explore the interaction between ethnicity and race and these other characteristics, i.e. whether ethnic/racial differentiation is more pronounced among the less educated.

Examining research findings on ethnic and racial variation points to the wide range of groups included within the broad "ethnic and race" rubric: racial and ethnic groups in the United States include major populations as diverse as African-Americans (and other Black Americans such as West Indian immigrants), Hispanics (including Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican and recent immigrants from other Spanish-speaking countries), Asians (divided, among others, into Chinese, Japanese and Filipinos) and Native Indians. When Europeans of diverse ethnic origins such as German, Irish, Italians, Portuguese, French Canadians, Russian and Jews are included (and the data are less commonly collected on ethnic White, non-Hispanics), the range widens considerably. These groups have been defined by subjective measures such as racial, ethnic and ancestry self-identification and more objective indicators such as the birthplace of the individual, regional area of parental birth or origins, generation in the country of destination, language usage and at times religion. As distance from immigrant origins increases and mixed ethnic-racial parentage becomes more common, the boundaries defining and delimiting ethnic and racial origins have become fuzzy. Who is in and who is out of the group has become variable over time, depending in part on how affiliation and group identification are defined, even among major racial categories. While reflecting the reality of fluid boundaries among ethnic and racial groups, the varying definitions over time and among research studies result in increasing difficulties in comparing the same group, historically and among communities.

Some have argued that racial variation (particularly the African-American experience) is not a special case of ethnic differentiation because of the unique history of African-Americans in the United States, the particular forms of racial discrimination that have long characterized Black-White relations and because of the particular patterns of residential segregation that have emerged. Hence, it has been argued that it is fundamentally incorrect to classify issues of race and ethnic groups together since the processes for these groups are fundamentally different and require different conceptual, methodological and measurement emphases. It seems clear that there is some merit in comparing differences among groups but there are also important features of uniqueness within each group. It is doubtful whether it is necessary to treat each group separately and in detail since the comparisons among groups allow us to isolate the unique and generalize about what is shared. Even so, it is problematic to generalize from the findings about one group to others, as it is from one time period to another. Our focus is on processes and connections that may characterize ethnic and racial groups in general, even as we recognize the unique culture of individual groups, their special histories and the particular features of their contemporary circumstances that have emerged in different contexts.



## **Theoretical guidelines**

It is most unlikely that one grand theory will provide a systematic explanation for the complex and changing linkages between ethnic and racial groups on the one hand, and social life on the other. The diversity of racial and ethnic groups in the pluralism that characterizes North America, the multiple dimensions that are included in a comprehensive assessment of social life and the changes over time in the meaning and importance of ethnic/racial differentiation militate against overarching theories of ethnic/racial assimilation or pluralism. Although theories of ethnic/racial differentiation have not been fully specified, social scientists have examined a sufficient amount of evidence and have developed broad theoretical frameworks to suggest some historical, economic, political and social guidelines. Clearly, as we have documented the extent of ethnic and racial differences and have moved away from the simple descriptive question of whether ethnic/racial groups are assimilating (or acculturating), we have focused in recent research on the central analytic question: what are the contexts that reinforce ethnic/racial distinctiveness and which are most likely to minimize or reduce racial/ethnic differences? In attempting to address this question, we have to consider the following:

1. There are macro socio-historical and economic contextual features that need to be considered in the examination of ethnic/racial differences. These include the historical bases of ethnic/racial ideologies, policies and practices, along with changes in the labor market and in the range of socio-economic opportunities.
2. The state (or local area) has a particularly important role in reinforcing ethnic/racial differentiation through its direct influence in shaping and enforcing ethnic/racial specific policies and indirectly through state and local policies about school patterns, real estate and housing, business practices, jobs, public welfare and health systems. Changes in the entitlement system of welfare states and their link to ethnic/racial factors are therefore critical in understanding ethnic/racial continuities and change.
3. The importance of formal and informal, explicit or subtle forms of discrimination in jobs, housing, schools and government allocations can not be ignored among the factors that reinforce ethnic/racial distinctiveness. In particular, we need to consider in detail differential access to economic and social opportunities, along with the opportunities themselves. However, the perception that discrimination occurs (independent of whether it can be documented "objectively") may have implications for ethnic/racial distinctiveness.
4. The changing overlap of socio-economic factors with ethnic/racial differentiation needs to be addressed directly. The concentration of ethnic/racial groups in particular jobs, neighborhoods, industries and schools implies, at times, socio-economic disadvantage and inequalities. Almost always this overlap indicates more intensive interaction within the

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racial and ethnic community than outside. The overlap of ethnic/race factors and social class combines with broad family-economic networks to forge bonds of community and generational continuities.

5. Changes in the generational reproduction of groups and their general demographic contours are important in understanding the dynamics of ethnic/racial group change. Population size, structure and cohort succession are structural features that connect to marriage markets, childbearing, schooling and the socialization of the next generation into the ethnic/racial community. Migration (and for some groups immigration) is of particular importance in the generational continuity of ethnic/racial groups at the national and community levels.

Ethnic/racial institutions are critical in sustaining continuity. Included are those institutions that are family-based and those political, social, cultural and community-based institutions that reinforce ethnic/racial distinctiveness. In the absence of discrimination or racial markers that distinguish groups and in the context of increasing ethnic convergences in social characteristics and access to socio-economic opportunities, ethnic institutions become the major constraint on the total assimilation of ethnic populations.

Using these and related points as guidelines, we should be able to disentangle cultural from social class effects associated with ethnic/racial groups; separate factors that reflect attitudes and perceptions from those that are primarily issues of access and availability; distinguish technological factors from those embedded in the social, demographic and economic structure; analyze those that reflect intergenerational continuities from those that are cohort-specific. We should separate individual-based factors from those that relate to the family and household, the community, the state and the broader society. And we should link institutional and community contexts to individual ethnic/racial identification over the life course.

This paper sketches the linkages between ethnic/racial groups and social life by first outlining some general methodological elements involved in the analysis of ethnic and racial differentiation. We point to some concrete measurement implications of the theoretical guidelines that have emerged and review how ethnic/racial differences have been explained in previous research. We then briefly suggest some ways to exploit the data available to incorporate measures of ethnic/racial intensities and elements of cohesion and context among ethnic and racial communities. While we can not "solve" the boundary question of who is affiliated with particular racial/ethnic groups, we also cannot avoid examining its implications for defining groups, for comparisons over time and among groups.



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### **Several methodological contexts**

We set the conceptual stage by making several methodological observations that apply to our understanding of ethnic and racial variation. Each of these considerations moves us beyond the sole focus on the individual as the unit of observation and as the unit of analysis at one point in time to incorporate larger units, over time, within a more dynamic life course and family framework. The salience of ethnic/racial differentiation and the underlying sources of group distinctiveness and continuity operate most clearly in these broader contexts over time.

Our first methodological concern centers around the importance of the life course connection. Emphasis on the relationship between ethnic/race categories and the life course appears odd at first glance, since these categories are often viewed as ascriptive, indeed primordial, fixed at birth and constant throughout the life course. However, such a view is distorting. There is considerable evidence that the classification of persons into ethnic/race categories is a social construction that varies with who is categorizing, who gets categorized and when these categories are applied within the life course. Thus, for example, young adults living alone may be less likely to identify themselves ethnically while families with young children may be more directly linked to ethnic communities through family networks, jobs, schools, friends and neighborhoods. Thus, the salience of ethnic identification may increase as new families are formed or transitions occur — marriage, death, childbearing — that link the generations. Since the boundaries dividing ethnic/racial groups tend to be flexible, people can shift between groups and often these occur at particular points during the life course. Multiple social identities have emerged in modern pluralistic societies; the salience of any one identity varies with the particular context, of which life course transitions are of special importance because of the link between the life course and family networks.

The life course perspective is dynamic and emphasizes the treatment of ethnic and racial classifications as variables, not constants. This perspective helps us to link life course changes to changes in the meaning and intensities of ethnic and racial differentiation, with an emphasis on family networks and intergenerational connections, not only on a fixed individual identity. It is reasonable to hypothesize that as transitions occur in the life course — as persons marry and form new families, as they become ill or seek medical treatment, as they have children or when they die, issues of community and family support, of local institutions and networks based on ethnic and racial origins become more salient. In contrast, at points in the life course where there is an emphasis on independence and autonomy, ethnic networks are likely to be less salient.

Life course transitions occur in a cohort context. Consider, for example, ethnic/racial variation in terms of the composition of generations (who have relatives and family available to be supportive in times of health care needs, reflecting in part the fertility and family history of the group), the history of migration (who lives where and near whom, revealing degrees of



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generational family access), the pattern of family structure and work (the extent of divorce and remarriage; the changing proportion of women working). Cohort contexts reveal exposure to integration, distance from origins and connections to cultures. Combined with period effects, the cohort perspective is of particular importance in the study of ethnic and racial differentiation over the life course.

A related consideration is the intensity of racial and ethnic affiliation. Too often our research energies have concentrated on measuring only the classification and categorization of individuals without sufficient attention to identifying how intensive is the connection between the individual and the group. At times, ethnic and racial categories do not capture the full range of effects precisely because they are based on a static classification, without taking into account the intensity of ethnic commitments and the variety of attachments within ethnic/racial communities. Generation status or foreign-language usage are obvious bases for greater ethnic intensity among some groups. The ethnic composition of neighborhoods or the participation in an ethnic economic enclave are other bases of ethnicity, as is the racial composition of neighborhoods or the presence of other race/ethnic groups which compete for jobs, housing, schooling and services. There may be specific family values or norms that are generationally transmitted or institutional structures that facilitate their continuity within ethnic and racial communities.

Ethnic intensity is likely to be greater when the ethnic origins (and hence the intergenerational bonds) of the couple are the same. When ethnic family members live close to each other, when they attend the same schools, have similar jobs and leisure time activities, marry within their own ethnic groups and are involved in ethnic social and political institutions, ethnic attachments within groups are more intensive. Examining the intensities of racial and ethnic attachments reinforces the notion that ethnic/race classifications should be treated not only with movable boundaries over time but with varying involvements in the ethnic/race community over the life course. There is a need, therefore, to study directly the overlap of residence, marriage and ethnicity and community-based institutions. We need to know more about families, not only those living in the household; for families are the core of what we mean by communities. Families and communities operate in terms of networks, sometimes but not always geographically proximate to the ethnic/racial group.

The influence of macro-level contexts extends beyond the individual, the family and the life course. The complexities of ethnic/race pluralism and the extent of formal and informal discrimination against particular groups are important contexts for exploring the macro links between ethnicity and social life. In this regard, the state as a socio-political institution plays an important role in shaping ethnic/race pluralism and in designing policies and norms that reduce or widen ethnic/race differentiation. Entitlement systems encourage and reinforce ethnic political mobilization and often become the basis for new forms of institutional expressions of race and ethnic interests. The state has an impact on race/ethnic communities in terms of local policies about socio-economic opportunities, housing, education and residence. These policy

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variants at the community level should be linked to ethnic/racial factors at the individual, family and household levels.

Operating between life course changes of the individual and the impact of the state at the macro level is, therefore, the level of families and households with their extensive patterns of exchanges which we refer to as community. Community and family factors seem to be the social basis of ethnic/racial continuity, shaping the ways individuals identify themselves ethnically and racially. The conjunction between ethnicity and social life may be most conspicuous at the community level. The shift away from an emphasis on populations and groups toward the self-identification of individuals has often resulted in an overemphasis on questions of "identity" and individual-based social constructs. There is a need to more directly and systematically incorporate community and household contexts in our research and in our measurement of ethnic/racial identification.

Ethnicity, in particular, more so than race, has often been assumed to diminish with time and exposure to the place of destination. As generations exposed to places of destination increase, the impact of the places of origin recedes in memory and diminishes in effect on the life of the group. As the third and fourth generations are socialized in places of destination, are integrated into the economy, are dispersed residentially and geographically, exposed to the influences of educational institutions and mass media, they melt away — homogenized into the larger culture and become undifferentiated through intergroup marriages and broader national identification. This view assumes the centrality of the past for the continuity of groups in the present and overemphasizes the individual to the exclusion of family and community. In the past, an awareness of the cultures of communities of origin was critical to retain connections to ethnic origins, as was language and foreignness. As a result, ethnicity was viewed as part of the past and our question became: How much of the past could be retained in the face of pressures toward integration and cultural homogenization? How long would it take before ethnicity becomes only "nostalgia" and hence more difficult to transmit generationally?

I think this is a limited perspective, misguided by the assumptions that underlie it and distorting the questions that we need to ask and the ways in which we can measure the phenomenon. In contemporary North American countries, ethnicity is constructed (or re-constructed) out of the present circumstances and reinforced by selected emphases from the past. Ethnicity is shaped not simply by what was but by what is, incorporating selectively from the past within the present. And what is ethnicity revolves around institutions created to sustain ethnic communities, either by the groups themselves or by the state. In the process, new ethnic/racial cultural forms emerge as different institutions develop to sustain these emergent cultural forms. Both the emergent culture and the adapting institutions are constructed from the past but are shaped by the present. Even when cultural differences weaken, institutions can retain and reshape communities. These institutions include family and kin, social, economic, cultural and political organizations. I would hypothesize that those groups that have retained, developed and



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extended organizations and institutions have more cohesive ethnic communities when compared to those whose search for individual identity or for cultural forms of the past take precedence over institutions.

These methodological issues of ethnic and racial groups primarily address the different units of observation and the connections between macro and micro levels involved in analysis. The need for community-based information linked to individual based-observations follows from these methodological connections. Linking the individual to the life course, to family and community, to networks and institutions and to broader political-economic contexts becomes the basis for identifying the connections between ethnic/race communities and their variation in social processes. These linkages help us focus on the intensities of ethnic connections, not only the classification of ethnic groups. Thus, these methodological issues address in the most fundamental way questions of the changing definition of group membership and affiliation, of the intensity of ethnic/racial communities and the difficulties inherent in cumulating results when comparisons across groups, between time periods and among research strategies are involved. We, therefore, turn to a consideration of how ethnic/race differences have been interpreted generally and how these interpretations provide guidelines for the analysis of ethnic/racial variation.

### **Interpreting ethnic/race differentiation: general orientations**

There are three types of basic interpretations that have been used to analyze ethnic/race variation. The first is an emphasis on the cultural. As with all generalizations, this is oversimplified, although useful for a broad orientation. It posits that ethnic/race variation reflects the culture or the values of the group. Seen from this perspective, ethnic/race differences are reduced over time through the acculturation of groups into the mainstream of society. Becoming culturally similar to the dominant group proceeds through increased educational attainment, contacts with others in schools, neighborhoods and on the job; through changes in the use of a foreign language and adopting local cultural values. The salience of ethnic/racial distinctiveness recedes as groups of diverse cultural origins adopt similar values. Remaining ethnic/racial differences reflect a legacy of the past that is temporary and transitional; or maintained by the state through multicultural policies.

To the extent that cultural factors are the primary sources of ethnic distinctiveness, they are more likely to characterize the foreign-born and their immediate family members and those that speak a language other than English, who have received most of their socialization elsewhere. Those who are second and third generation, who have, along with their parents, received their formal and informal socialization in places of destination are more distant from their cultural roots and more likely to have patterns similar to the native-born. It is also likely that ethnic groups who are culturally closer to the native population (i.e. those whose values are from countries that most closely resemble North America or Western Europe) are most likely to lose



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their cultural distinctiveness than others whose cultural roots are more dissimilar (see for example Glazer 1983; Gordon 1963). European-origin immigrants and their children in the United States are, therefore, likely to be less distinctive culturally than immigrants and their children from Asia, Latin America or other Third World countries.

Clearly an emphasis on cultural themes and values focuses our measurement attention on indicators of values and foreignness, closeness to the sources of ethnic/cultural origins. Our questions about acculturation address themes of becoming similar in values and culture to the majority population or the attempt to salvage the cultures of the past. Distinctiveness revolves around the cultural transmission among groups and its weakening as generational exposure to new cultures increase.

A second set of explanations treats ethnic and racial distinctiveness as a reflection of the social class composition of ethnic/racial groups. The association of ethnic/race differences with socio-economic disadvantage and inequality has a long history in American social science research and usually includes those studies that have focused on immigrant White ethnics, primarily those immigrating at the turn of the twentieth century, the racial issues of the Black minority and the Hispanic and Asian groups. In large part the argument is that ethnic/race differences, whether generated by discrimination and racism, by unequal access to opportunities or fed by immigration and the occupational and educational origins of ethnic-immigrant groups reflect in their impact the disadvantaged socio-economic status of the group as a whole and the inequalities that are represented in the overlap of social class and race/ethnic origins. Differences among ethnic/racial groups that are observed are, therefore, really social class differences.

In its more extreme form, this social class argument views ethnic and racial differences as epiphenomenal and therefore distorting of the underlying socio-economic disadvantage of disenfranchised groups (see, for example, Steinberg 1981; Blauner 1989). This perspective redirects the analysis of ethnic/race differences to the analysis of poverty and inequality, social class discrimination and competition and their attendant correlates and consequences. The reduction of economic discrimination, changing the overlap of class and race/ethnic origins through education and job opportunities, through residential mobility and generational discontinuities in socio-economic characteristics should reduce the basis of ethnic and racial distinctiveness.

Both the cultural and social class perspectives tap important dimensions of the differences among race and ethnic groups in the United States. Taken together, they argue that ethnic/race differences are the combined consequence of cultural and social class factors; when social class factors are neutralized and discrimination minimized, the remaining ethnic/race differences are "only" cultural; the unmeasured residual "cultural" factors are minor and tend to weaken generationally. Cultural factors are reinforced by the disadvantaged socio-economic position of ethnic/racial groups that reflects economic origins (including skills of the first generation

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acquired elsewhere), discrimination and blocked opportunities. In more complex interaction, cultural forms of ethnicity and race are considered more intense among the less educated, poorer social classes since social mobility, the attainment of middle class and higher statuses minimizes the salience of ethnic and racial distinctiveness.

Both perspectives, in their own way, project the demise or at least the diminishing of ethnic and racial differences when cultural integration occurs, usually with length of exposure to America generationally, linguistically, and in terms of socialization experiences in schools, when job discrimination and residential segregation are reduced, i.e. when social class factors are equalized. Both perspectives are derived from a general theoretical framework that assumes that ethnic/racial particularism and discrimination are likely to decline over time as a result of the conditions of modernization and the integration of groups into a political and economic system based on merit, achievement and universalism. Hence, with modernization, it is argued (often implicitly) the social class basis of ethnic/racial differentiation declines and cultural differences are homogenized. In short, the salience of group differences diminishes. Indeed, the African-American exception often is used to prove the rule: when discrimination blocks the integration of groups and their access to economic opportunities, continued inequality and racial distinctiveness are reinforced. Residential segregation and family patterns are reinforced by state policies and, in turn, are linked to the generational continuity of racial differentiation.

An alternative and complementary view to the cultural and social class arguments and the third framework places emphasis on the structural networks and the power of community and its institutions that reinforce ethnic and racial distinctiveness and identity. The networks of ethnic and racial communities may be extensive, are often tied to places of residence and family connections, are linked to economic activities and enclaves and are expressed in political ties, cultural expressions and lifestyles. The networks are reinforced by institutions and organizations that are ethnically and racially based. When we ask the question, what are the conditions under which ethnic and racial communities become stronger and weaker, we move beyond the question of whether it is culture and/or social class that is at the core of ethnic and racial differentiation. The key argument in this perspective is that the cohesion of ethnic and racial communities is based on institutions and networks; therefore, the intensity of community is facilitated by the intensity of social networks – the greater the social networks and the more intensive the institutions, the greater the cohesion of the ethnic/racial community. Cohesion is reflected in both interaction patterns and in cultural expressions. The larger the number of spheres where interaction occurs within the racial/ethnic community, the more cohesive the group; the greater the arenas of cultural particularities and activities, the higher the rate of ethnic/racial attachments. (For an application of this argument to the historical and comparative conditions of one ethnic-religious minority in Europe and America, see Goldscheider and Zuckerman, 1984.)



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According to this perspective, the basis of the ethnic/racial community is the extent of ethnic ties to the labor market over the life course, not simply the overlap of ethnicity and social class; changing economic networks forge the greater interactions within ethnic and racial communities, developing bonds of family and economic activities for family members at different points during the life course. The support of kin and family and the concentration of ethnic groups in geographically defined areas become another important basis of ethnic cohesion. Whatever the values and common background, the specific history and unique culture that may bind ethnic/racial members together in a "primordial" sense, the key factors involved within this framework are structural – residence, jobs, schooling and family. The cultural bases of ethnic groups reinforce and justify the cohesion of the community and are themselves variable, but do not determine its continuity. Cultural distinctiveness and values are not abstract but occur in contexts and change over time as contexts change. Even the standard indicators of culture for immigrant groups such as language as the vehicle of cultural transmission are linked to structural cohesion, since ethnic languages and racial expressions are bases for communication among ethnically and racially affiliated communities and for family and economic networks.

When the networks and communication within ethnic and racial groups are strong, then ethnic and racial group attachments are more salient. Viewed in this way, ethnic and racial distinctiveness is not limited to unacculturated immigrant groups or to racial groups that have experienced discrimination and are economically disadvantaged. Although these groups are likely to be distinctive, ethnic and racial differentiation is unlikely to be limited to them. Ethnic and racial communities are those that are sustained by informal institutions and networks, often reinforced by local politics and policies and enhanced by family connections.

In this perspective, modernization does not automatically or necessarily imply the reduction of ethnic and racial group distinctiveness, even when discrimination diminishes and social mobility occurs. Under some conditions, modernization processes reinforce distinctiveness, particularly when the social processes imply increased socio-economic competition among ethnic and racial groups, intensified forms of economic concentration and voluntary residential segregation. Often the processes involved in modernization redefine the nature of communities in ways that go beyond issues of cultural values. Indeed, the redefinition may occur precisely when acculturation takes place, when the values among groups become more similar and when competition among groups becomes sharper. So even with social mobility and improvements of education and jobs, there may be increased job and economic concentration at the upper levels of socio-economic status, just as in the past there was concentration at lower socio-economic levels. In these ways, there is an overlap of social class and ethnic/racial groups but that overlap is not confined to disadvantaged classes. It is not only the overlap of ethnic groups with large social class categories (e.g., middle classes) but specific job-industry concentrations that help shape the emerging definitions of ethnic and racial communities. Under some conditions, modernization results in the total assimilation of ethnic groups through the erosion of community- and family-based institutions, through residential integration and intergroup



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marriages, through open market forces and universal schooling, through state policies that provide access to opportunities and enforce nondiscrimination. But not always; not for all groups; not as an inevitable by-product of urbanization, industrialization and social mobility.

### **Measurement and analytic implications**

Clearly the way we measure ethnicity and race reflects the constraints of our data-gathering techniques and our theoretical perspective. We have tended especially in census-type studies to limit our measures to cross sections and to static views of ethnic and racial differentiation, identifying the best ways to categorize individuals. We have de-emphasized the dynamics of ethnic and racial groups over the life course and have rarely developed household-based measures of ethnicity and race. We tend to favor "objective" rather than "subjective" criteria (preferring, for example, place-of-birth data to questions on self-identification) and agonize over the meaning of multiple responses to our ethnic and racial categories, even as we recognize the potential "correctness" of such responses. You can have multiple ethnic ancestries but are more likely to have one current ethnic identity.

Given the administrative goals of the census and survey-type official data-collection agencies, the politics of question inclusion in government documents and the financial constraints of budgets, have we done well in our development of ethnic and racial categories and their measurement? I think so. Can we do better? Perhaps.

What should we ask about ethnic and racial populations to obtain a clearer picture of the meanings of ethnic and racial group differentiation, intensity, community and generational dynamics? The answer is that we ask, at least in the United States and in Canada, a rather extensive list of questions that allows us to categorize persons into racial and ethnic categories (and, in Canada, religion), often combining questions on ethnic identity and ancestry. We have not systematically included questions on ethnic self-identification (e.g., "Considering your ancestry or heritage, how do you identify yourself?") or subjective assessments of ethnic and racial intensity (e.g., "How important is your ethnic [or racial] identity to you in your daily life?"). Similarly, while we have an extensive data base for characterizing the ethnic/racial composition of neighborhoods, we might consider obtaining new information on the ethnic/racial composition of the work place (or among friends). There are some bases for not including these and related-type questions but they might be considered experimentally in future large-scale surveys, particularly those focusing on the labor force. While there is always room for improving the formulation of questions that we ask and always good arguments for asking more questions, I think that the major advances in the study of race and ethnic differentiation will come from new forms of analysis of the data that we have already collected and not primarily from the refinements or additions to our surveys and censuses.

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My main concern is that we have not fully utilized the data that we have already collected or maximized the value of large-scale census collections on the questions we have already asked. Indeed, I would argue that the issue of studying ethnic/race differentiation is not the adequacy of questions to be included but the inadequate theoretical modelling to assist us in developing measures and constructs from the data we have already collected. Our models of ethnicity and race tend to be oversimplified and do not always guide us toward the utilization of the extensive, rich data that are available. Let me explain by referring to some of the conceptual themes I alluded to earlier.

From what we reviewed it is clear that ethnic/racial differentiation is not simply the "identification" of individuals in a social or cultural vacuum. To disentangle the relative meanings of ethnicity and race we need to link individual expressions to social contexts, both socio-economic and cultural. And these, in turn, should be integrated within a life course analysis at the household, if not at the family, level. Moreover, we should place more prominently on our research agenda three major interrelated themes in the analysis (i.e. in the modelling) of ethnic/race differentiation: the importance of community; the role of institutions; and the inclusion of intensity in understanding ethnic and racial distinctiveness.

We have already justified the importance of examining the community contexts of ethnic and racial differentiation. By exploiting the hierarchical nature of census information and the details available for small areas, we should be able to construct a series of ethnic and racial measures at the community-neighborhood level. In turn, these measures could be attached to each individual and household. In this way we could examine, for example, whether persons of Hispanic ancestry living in households where all the other members are also Hispanic and in areas of high Hispanic density differ in some ways from Hispanics living in households where all the other members are not Hispanics and/or in areas of low Hispanic density. Do those who identify themselves as of Irish ancestry who live in households (and neighborhoods) of high Irish density differ from those who live in households and neighborhoods of low Irish density? This is a straightforward, hardly innovative suggestion that flows from our conceptualization that links ethnic identity at the individual level to the household and neighborhood levels. Nevertheless, we have not systematically followed through on its implementation at the levels of households and at the neighborhood, small area levels.

In addition to ethnic/racial density at the local level, we should also attach other contextual indicators to individuals and to households. These might include local economic market conditions, local policies relevant to ethnic/racial groups and the presence of local ethnic/racial institutions. This latter point needs special attention, since data on local institutions often come from different data sources than individual-based survey and census data. The presence of ethnic social clubs or ethnic churches within a community may influence the expressions and meanings of ethnic/racial differentiation. Linking these to neighborhood characteristics brings us closer to the community contexts of ethnic and racial groups.

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This leads us to re-emphasize the importance of going beyond categories of ethnic/racial groups to issues of ethnic/racial intensity. The ethnic/racial concentration in jobs, neighborhoods and in schools are obvious examples, as has been the practice of asking about language usage and generation. The interethnic household composition goes a long way toward obtaining the ethnic context of everyday life as does neighborhood. An interesting variant is to obtain information on the ethnic identification of children whose families are of mixed ethnic (or racial) origins. The belief that ethnic intermarriage is the quintessential indicator of assimilation and that high rates imply the erosion of community assumes further that the children of such intermarriages will not select the ethnic identity of one of their parents. It seems plausible to begin testing that inference directly with the data available. Linking neighborhood and household ethnic/racial characteristics provides an important basis for assessing how the interethnically married relate to differential ethnic family origins.

Clearly the linkages between individual identity, households and community factors will bring us closer to measuring the emerging patterns of ethnicity and race in American society. At the same time, we need to continue to find ways to disentangle ethnic/race factors from social class, culture, life course and related characteristics.

Issues of ethnicity and race can be central in the lives of individuals and in the values of families and groups. Race and ethnicity may not necessarily be transitional or unimportant features of modern society but may be embedded in its institutions, politics and economy in ways that are likely to have an impact on the lives of those of at least one more generation. Current patterns of immigration insure that ethnic and racial origins will remain factors that distinguish communities for an even longer period of time. Policies to reduce differential ethnic patterns and to provide equitable economic opportunities and access to them for the diverse ethnic and racial population mosaic in the United States and Canada need to begin with an appreciation of the complexities of linking racial/ethnic differentiation to communities and to study ways toward its creative measurement.



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# *Definition and Dimensions of Ethnicity: A Theoretical Framework*

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## **An introductory note: Methodological assumptions**

To research any phenomenon one has to find empirical indicators of it. If the research is to be thorough, the indicators must be such as to test as many aspects as possible of the phenomenon studied. This does not mean that maximum number of indicators is necessary for a full study of the phenomenon. On the contrary, it is usually desirable to have a minimum number of indicators. However, it is imperative that the minimum number of indicators be such that they do not exclude any of the essential aspects of the phenomenon. If one or a few indicators are unable to capture the nature of the phenomenon, then it is logically imperative that more indicators be used. Sometimes a battery of indicators may be necessary.

The exact number of indicators should not be chosen either arbitrarily or on purely theoretical grounds but should be selected as a conclusion of a thorough empirical study. The study should include a great variety of indicators and reduce the number to the minimum only as a consequence of empirical testing (Lazarsfeld and Henry 1968).

Ethnicity is a complex phenomenon. The task of the theoretician is to outline at least what can be said to be the essential dimensions of this phenomenon and to indicate the directions of their possible variations. If researchers choose to study in-depth only one or a few aspects of the phenomenon, it is logically incumbent upon them to point out how these selected aspects may relate to the other aspects of the phenomenon.

## **Definitions of ethnicity in the past twenty years**

I will single out a number of approaches which have been offered in the past two decades and will attempt to critically evaluate them. But it should be remembered that there is a variation in the degree to which these approaches are distinct and the extent to which they have been accepted by scholars. I do not claim to exhaust all possible approaches which one might find in the literature. I simply single out those which appear to me to be the most important approaches that have been discussed and used in research in the last 20 years.

We can distinguish four major approaches and a number of sub-approaches, some of which cut across the major ones. They are: 1) ethnicity conceived as a primordial phenomenon; 2) ethnicity conceived as an epiphenomenon; 3) ethnicity conceived as a situational phenomenon; 4) ethnicity conceived as a purely subjective phenomenon.



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The primordialist approach is the oldest in sociological and anthropological literature. It argues that ethnicity is something given, ascribed at birth, deriving from the kin-and-clan-structure of human society and hence something more or less fixed and permanent (Geertz 1963; Isaacs 1975; Stack 1986).

The other three approaches emerged in confutation of the primordialist approach. The epiphenomenon approach is best represented by Michael Hechter's theory of internal colonialism and cultural division of labour and, to a lesser extent, by Edna Bonacich (1972). Hechter (1978) divides the economic structure of society into two sectors, centre and periphery. The periphery consists of marginal jobs whose products are not unimportant to society as, for example, agricultural work, but which offer little in the form of compensation as compared to the jobs in the centre. It is in this peripheral labour sector that immigrants concentrate, develop their own solidarity and maintain their culture. Ethnicity, thus, is something created and maintained by an uneven economy or a product of economic exploitation (see also Nagel and Olzak 1982).

It should be remembered that in the seventies one school of thought, the American and Canadian traditional, sometimes called "crude" Marxists, was hostile to ethnic studies as an independent area. Its followers rejected any independent definition of ethnicity, especially one which emphasizes culture. Their position derived from their assumption that all culture was epiphenomenal to class.

Hechter's approach, however, met empirical criticism from a number of sources (Nielsen 1980; Makabe 1981); notably the ethnic enclave economy provided much disconfirming evidence (Wilson and Portes 1980; Portes 1984; Sanders and Nee 1987).

The logic of the situational approach is based on rational choice theory. According to this approach, ethnicity is something which may be relevant in some situations but not in others. Individuals may choose to be regarded as members of an ethnic group if they find it to their advantage. Perhaps the best examples of this approach are the works of Michael Banton (1983), Daniel Bell (1975) and Jeffrey Ross (1982). Banton sees it as a rational choice option of an individual in any circumstance. Bell and Ross emphasize the political advantage of ethnic membership choice. Thus, ethnicity is "a group option in which resources are mobilized for the purpose of pressuring the political system to allocate public goods for the benefit of the members of a self-differentiating collectivity" (Ross 1982). In more general terms, it refers to the actor's willing ascription of ethnic identity to organize the meaning of his social relationships within the requirements of variously structured social situations (Okamura 1981; Nagata 1974). This approach appears to have been more popular in the mid-seventies to mid-eighties period.

No doubt the situational theories point to an important function which ethnic identity and ethnic groups can serve, but in terms of basic conceptions of what ethnicity is, they confuse function, or use, of the phenomenon with its nature. To assert that something is what it does is to beg

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the question. Obviously, there are many cases where the adherence to an ethnic group cannot be explained by instrumental reasons alone. The subjective import of ethnic group membership does not lie just in one's pursuit of practical interest but also, and perhaps foremost, in one's feelings and a complex conception of identity.

Perhaps the most interesting of these four approaches is the subjective approach which sees ethnicity as basically a social-psychological reality or a matter of perception of "us" and "them" in contradistinction to looking at it as something given which exists objectively, as it were, "out there." This does not mean that all "subjectivists" reject all objective aspects of ethnicity. Some, in fact, give them significant attention. But they all tend to make it dependent on the socio-psychological experience.

There were two factors which stimulated the emergence of the subjectivist approach in the study of ethnicity in the past 20 years. First, Fredrik Barth's (1969) seminal work on ethnic group boundaries had a strong influence on both anthropologists and sociologists. Secondly, in American and Canadian sociology, the approach has been spurred by empirical studies of ethnic generations, particularly the third generation.

Barth himself took a rather extreme position. For practical purposes he jettisoned culture from the concept of ethnicity. For him, ethnic boundaries were psychological boundaries; ethnic culture and its content were irrelevant. Ethnic group is hence a result of group relations in which the boundaries are established through mutual perceptions and not by means of any objectively distinct culture.

A less extreme position has been that of the symbolic ethnicity approach as formulated by H. Gans (1979). The idea here is that ethnicity is not anymore what it used to be. It lost its practical everyday value but has remained to play on symbolic level where it works to identify people who otherwise are acculturated and assimilated into a different, predominantly urban, American culture and society (see also Edwards and Doucette 1987).

Another type of subjectivist approach to the study of ethnicity – one that appears to be connected with the postmodernist movement in contemporary thought – is constructionism. In the United States it represents W. Yancey's (1976) influence (Susan Smith 1984; Hanna Herzog 1984; and also to some extent J.Y. Okamura 1981). In Canada it is best represented by Danielle Juteau's work (1991). Theoretically, this approach lies somewhere between Michel Foucault's (1967) emphasis on construction of the metaphor and Pierre Bourdieu's (1977), Bentley's (1987), Yelvington's (1991) notions of practice and habitus as the basic factors shaping the structure of all social phenomena. The basic notion in this approach is that ethnicity is something that is being negotiated and constructed in everyday living. Ethnicity is a process which continues to unfold. It has relatively little to do with Europe, Africa, Asia, etc., but much to do with the



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exigencies of everyday survival. It is constructed in the process of feeding, clothing, sending to school and conversing with children and others.

### **Ethnicity defined**

Some time ago I published an article entitled "Definitions of Ethnicity" (1974) in which I tried to: 1) review the definitions of ethnicity existing at that time in sociological literature, and 2) develop my own definition of the concept of ethnic group according to a number of logical criteria. I will base my discussion of the nature of ethnicity on this previous work but will modify or expand a number of its aspects in order to take into account the developments in the past 20 years.

First of all, the meaning of the concept of ethnicity depends on the meaning of several other concepts, particularly those of ethnic group and ethnic identity. The concept of ethnic group is the most basic from which the others are derivative. It refers to ethnicity as the collective phenomenon. Ethnic identity refers to ethnicity as an individually experienced phenomenon. Ethnicity itself is an abstract concept which includes an implicit reference to both collective and individual aspects of the phenomenon.

There are several basic dimensions which ethnicity includes on either the collective or individual level. If a researcher is to measure ethnicity fully, he/she must find at least some indicators of each one of these dimensions. Thus, ethnicity can be said to have both an objective and a subjective dimension. Methodologically the difference between the two consists in direct or indirect observability. Objective aspects are those which can be observed as facts in the existence of institutions, including that of kinship and descent, and in the overt behaviour patterns of individuals. The subjective dimensions refer to attitudes, values and preconceptions whose meaning has to be interpreted in the context of the process of communication.

Furthermore, notwithstanding some of the contemporary approaches, the point of departure for our understanding of the nature of ethnicity has to be the idea of distinct culture. Culture is conceived here partially in the traditional anthropological sense as involving a total way of life. The total way of life, however, does not necessarily mean simply a set of distinct everyday customs, although it may include these. Rather, it refers to a unique historical group experience. Culture is in essence a system of encoding such experience into a set of symbolic patterns. It does not matter how different the elements of one culture are from another culture. A distinct culture is a manifestation of a group's distinct historical experience. Its product is a sense of unique peoplehood.

The emphasis on culture as the point of departure for our understanding of the nature of ethnicity is not intended to mean that members of an ethnic group must always share one and the same culture to the exclusion of any other. Rather, it is intended to mean that persons who



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include themselves in an ethnicity would have a relation to a group who either now or at some point in the past has shared a unique culture.

### **Ethnic Group**

Let us now define the concept of ethnic group as referring to a community-type group of people who share the same culture or to descendants of such people who may not share this culture but who identify themselves with this ancestral group.

The objective dimensions of ethnic groups include the presence of at least some community institutions or organizations, the fact of having descendants and ancestors as a focus of cultural transmission and identity formation, and the fact that there is a "script" for cultural behaviour in the form of customs, rituals and preconceptions which provides the content to culture and its transmission and is manifested in overt behaviour patterns.

The subjective dimension of ethnic groups refers to what, since F. Barth's work, has been known as ethnic boundaries. These are social-psychological boundaries and refer to the fact of group-inclusion and exclusion. There are two types of ethnic boundaries, those from within the ethnic group (internal) and those from without the ethnic group (external). In many ways the dynamics of interethnic relations depend on the relationship between these two boundaries. The internal boundaries mark the area of self-inclusion in the group. They overlap with the process of self-identity. They articulate with the feelings of sympathy and loyalty toward members of the same ethnic group. The external boundaries delineate the perimeter of exclusion of membership; it is the demarcation of the space of the outsiders. In a multiethnic society in which members of different ethnic groups interact and compete with one another, the existence of internal boundaries will inevitably produce external boundaries. Persons will be identified by others as belonging to one or another ethnic group even if they no longer actively share any cultural patterns with that ethnic group as long as a link to their ancestors can be made. Identification by others, in turn, usually stimulates self-identification and may condition new forms of social organization. Hence, ethnicity is a matter of a double boundary, a boundary from within, maintained by the socialization process, and a boundary from without, established by the process of intergroup relations. It is in terms of the relationship between these two boundaries that the differences between ethnicity in Canada and in the U.S. can be most fruitfully compared. I would suggest that the basic difference lies in the external boundaries. It is not so much a matter of faster or slower assimilation and nonassimilation. More significantly, it is a matter of how the various ethnic groups are perceived and identified by others in the two societies, but especially how they are perceived and identified by the power-holding, policy-making and influence-exerting bodies of the two societies. Thus, the external ethnic boundaries would be reflected in the reasons and rationales behind specific immigration policies, cultural policies and the like (Isajiw 1974, 122).

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The external ethnic boundaries are also the source of racial distinctions and of race as a group phenomenon. As a social phenomenon, race is a response to external categorization and exclusion and whatever internal dynamics race generates, it is always a response to external exclusion rather than to internal identity-generating forces. The latter are the forces of ethnicity formation. It is true that external boundaries would tend to activate or reinforce internal boundaries. But as the history of the American Black movements in the past half-century has shown, genuine internal boundaries among the American Blacks have not formed until the movement reached for the roots of American Black culture in Africa and found its own cultural patterns and values in American history.

External boundaries, however, are an important source of political mobilization and the unity which this brings about. But this unity should not be confused with the one generated by the internal boundaries. Hence, rather than ethnicity, external boundaries are a significant source of pan-ethnicity, as can be seen in the case of Afro-Americans and the Caribbeans, the Hispanics in the United States, the Canadian native peoples in recent constitutional conflicts and others.

The scope of ethnic internal boundaries will determine the difference between ethnic and regional groups as, for example, the difference between the Calabresi and the Italians. A regional group may have a way of life that can be seen as a culture. But to the extent that the identity of the regional group is perceived as one of a number of identities that are constituent of a larger group, to that extent this identity is a subidentity and subculture of a broader, ethnic identity and culture. Thus, to the extent the Calabresi see themselves as Italians alongside other regions, e.g., Friuli, Tuscany, etc., to that extent regional identity is a subidentity of the broader Italian ethnicity. There are, of course, groups that may otherwise be regions but who refuse to see themselves as part of larger identities as, for example, the Basques of Spain. To the extent that they do so and in as much as they have a history of their own and their culture includes distinct elements, to that extent they are a different ethnic group rather than simply a region.

Internal boundaries include also multiple ethnicities as, for example, deriving from ethnically mixed parentage. Ethnic identities are not necessarily exclusive of one another. But this is a matter of ethnicity as an individual phenomenon to be discussed next.

### **Ethnic Identity**

On the individual level, ethnicity is a social-psychological process which gives an individual a sense of belonging and identity. It is, of course, one of a number of social phenomena which produce a sense of identity. Ethnic identity can be defined as a manner in which persons, on account of their ethnic origin, locate themselves psychologically in relation to one or more social systems and in which they perceive others as locating them in relation to those systems. By ethnic origin is meant either that a person has been socialized in an ethnic group or that his or her ancestors, real or symbolic, have been members of the group. The social systems may be



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one's ethnic community or society at large or other ethnic communities and other societies or groups or a combination of all these (Isajiw 1990).

Locating oneself in relation to a community and society is not only a psychological phenomenon but also a social phenomenon in the sense that the internal psychological states express themselves objectively in external behaviour patterns that come to be shared by others. Thus, individuals locate themselves in one or another community internally by states of mind and feelings, such as self-definitions or feelings of closeness, and externally by behaviour appropriate to these states of mind and feelings. Behaviour according to cultural patterns is thus an expression of identity and can be studied as an indication of its character.

We can thus distinguish external and internal aspects of ethnic identity. External aspects refer to observable behaviour, both cultural and social, such as 1) speaking an ethnic language, practising ethnic traditions; 2) participation in ethnic personal networks such as family and friendships; 3) participation in ethnic institutional organizations such as churches, schools, enterprises, media; 4) participation in ethnic voluntary associations such as clubs, "societies," youth organizations and 5) participation in functions sponsored by ethnic organizations such as picnics, concerts, public lectures, rallies, dances.

The internal aspects of ethnic identity refer to images, ideas, attitudes and feelings. These, of course, are interconnected with the external behaviour. But it should not be assumed that, empirically, the two types are always dependent upon each other. Rather, they may vary independently as, for example, a third generation person may retain a higher degree of internal than of external aspects. We can distinguish at least three types of internal aspects of identity: 1) cognitive, 2) moral and 3) affective.

The cognitive dimension of identity includes, first, self-images and images of one's group. These may be stereotypes of self or of the group and perceived stereotypes by others of oneself and one's group. It also includes knowledge of one's group's heritage and its historical past. This knowledge may not necessarily be extensive or objective. It may rather focus on selected aspects or events or historical personalities that are highly symbolic of the group's experiences and which, thus, have become a legacy. Finally, the cognitive dimension includes knowledge of one's group's values since these are part of the group's heritage.

The moral dimension of identity involves feelings of group obligations. In general, feelings of group obligations have to do with the importance a person attaches to his or her group and the implications the group has for the person's behaviour. Specifically, it would include such feelings of obligation as the importance of teaching the ethnic language to one's children, or marrying within the group, or of helping members of the group with finding a job. Feelings of obligation account for the commitment a person has to his group and for the group solidarity that ensues. They can be said to constitute the central dimension of subjective identity. So far, no



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theory of ethnic identity has conceptualized group obligations as constituting its core dimension. A number of researchers, such as Geismar (1954), have asked questions of their respondents about such obligations without, however, conceptualizing them as a central notion of subjective ethnic identity.

The affective, or cathectic, dimension of identity refers to feelings of attachment to the group. Two types of such feelings can be distinguished: 1) feelings of security with, sympathy and associative preference for members of one's group as against members of other groups and 2) feelings of security and comfort with the cultural patterns of one's group as against the cultural patterns of other groups or societies.

### **Types of ethnicity**

Confusion as to the nature of ethnicity has often derived from a lack of an adequate typology of ethnic groups and ethnic identities. Significant criteria of classification of any phenomena can be those which refer to those characteristics of the phenomena which have an effective influence, in our case, on interethnic group relations and on the interaction process among individuals of various ethnic backgrounds.

### **Types of Ethnic Groups**

What follows is not a complete classification of types of ethnic groups. It uses as criteria of classification the locus of group organization, degree and nature of self-awareness in ethnic organization, structural location in interethnic relations and the generational factor. According to these criteria we can distinguish the following types of ethnic groups: primary and secondary ethnic groups, folk-community and nationality-community ethnic groups, dominant majority and subordinate minority ethnic groups, immigrant or "young" and established or "old" ethnic groups.

#### **Primary and secondary ethnic groups**

This distinction refers to the place of origin where the group's culture emerged as a distinct entity. Primary ethnic groups are those which exist in the same place in which historically they have been formed. They are indigenous groups. Examples are the French in France, Germans in Germany, etc., and also native Indians in the Americas, Andalusians in Spain, etc. Secondary ethnic groups are those which have their origin in a society different from the one in which they currently exist as, for example, the Italians, Germans, etc., in Canada or the United States. They are, as it were, transplanted groups which share their cultural and historical background with the society from which they emigrated but which do not depend any more on the original society for their existence.

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This does not preclude the possibility that the primary ethnic group at some time in history might have been itself a secondary ethnic group in relation to its own ancestors. In history, however, the shift from the secondary to primary ethnic groups has been rather infrequent. In the past, great migrations of peoples have taken place only in certain periods of history. Migrations of peoples who provided the bases for the European primary ethnic groups took place in prehistoric times and the formation of most European ethnicities, the German, French, Italian, Polish, Ukrainian, Russian, etc., was a long historical process after the original migrations. Indeed, often it is forgotten that contemporary ethnic groups have important features which trace their origins to prehistoric times and which are still quite viable.

In modern times, in the Western world, American, Canadian and several Latin American ethnicities can be said to be in the process of formation as primary ethnic groups.

Development of secondary ethnic groups has been a much more common phenomenon in modern times, especially in the context of migration to the New World, and it can be argued that the secondary ethnic groups will be even a more prevalent phenomenon in the future as international migration increases.

### Folk-community and nationality-community ethnic groups

The distinction between the folk community and nationality as types of ethnic groups was originally drawn by Ihor Zielyk (1975). It can be incorporated here with some modifications. The basic principle of distinction here is cultural self-awareness. Nationality groups are those which are culturally highly self-aware. That is, their members share an image of themselves as a collectivity united by a distinct culture rather than by their kin or clan. An essential part of this image is a conception of the history of the group as legacy. The organizational life of the ethnic community articulates this image in its normative systems. As Max Weber has pointed out, the significance of nationality is anchored in the conception of uniqueness, irreplaceability or superiority of cultural values that are seen as preservable or developable only through the efforts of the group itself. This includes a certain sense of collective mission.

An ethnic group which is a folk community is one whose members are predominantly of peasant background. The community is little differentiated in social status. The character of social relationships among the members of the community is determined by kinship and close family friendships. The centre of social organization is the religious institution, the church, around which develop other organizations; it exerts a pervasive influence on the whole community. Folk community groups lack a developed conception of the group's history as legacy. The folk community's culture is what Robert Redfield (1960) described as the "little tradition," embodied in custom, song and transmitted in a proverbial manner.



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Members of the nationality community are differentiated in social status. Many of them have experienced some form of social mobility into professional occupations. Likewise, organizationally, it is a differentiated community. But the manifest goals of the organizational life are not fulfilment of individual members' interests but fulfilment of collective goals of the community to which individual interests are expected to be subordinated. There is also a tendency toward integration of organization into all-inclusive bodies.

The culture of the nationality community develops what Redfield called a "great tradition" including literary, artistic and intellectual achievements. The culture, however, tends to centre around an ideology. An essential part of the ideology is a conception of the group's history as legacy. This may be an ideology of messianism referring to freedom from collective oppression or exploitation or an ideology of maintaining and fostering a "cultured" or a "civilized" way of life.

Modern and contemporary history is characterized by many previously folk community-type groups transforming themselves into nationality-type groups. Nationalism has been a central factor in the process of this transformation. In this process, many groups focus their ideology around a territory which they claim to be legitimately theirs. Examples can be Quebec, the native peoples in Canada, native peoples in Australia and other parts of the world. Hence, a strong feature of the ideologies expounded by these groups is irredentism and the idea of sovereignty or self-determination. Many of these groups refer to themselves as nations. Sociologically, a nation can be defined as a nationality community that has its own independent state. A nation, thus, can be conceived as the outgrowth of a high degree of self-awareness of an occupationally differentiated ethnic group with a territorial claim.

### Majority and minority ethnic groups

Sociologically, the concepts of majority and minority refer not to numbers but to power. Simply stated, the distinction is between those groups which have or have not power in society. Often the concept of ethnicity is confused with that of minority and all ethnic groups are seen as minorities. By this, the majority groups become ethnicityless and it becomes difficult to understand what culture of the "general" society is all about, or if it is there at all, and consequently the meaning of interethnic relations becomes confusing.

Majority ethnic groups are those that determine the character of the society's basic institutions, especially the main political, economic and cultural institutions. They determine the character of the norms of society as a whole including the legal system. Their culture becomes the culture of the total society into which the minority ethnic groups assimilate. The minority groups may preserve their institutions and culture in larger or smaller degree or they may influence the character of the dominant institutions in larger or smaller degrees, but usually the framework



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for intergroup processes is provided by the institutions deriving from the culture of the majority groups.

The majority groups, because of their position of power, usually are at the top of the ethnic stratification system and the status of other ethnic groups is assessed in relation to them. Much of the dynamics of interethnic relations derives from the structure of dominance and subordination involved in the majority-minority ethnic group relations. Majorities are the main definers of external ethnic boundaries and hence in a position to have the deciding voice regarding public policies and legislation regarding minorities.

### "Young" and "old" ethnic groups

A common confusion in the discourse on ethnicity is that of ethnicity and immigration. Ethnicity often is erroneously identified with immigrants but immigrants make up only one type of ethnic group. We can distinguish between "young" groups, i.e. those made up predominantly of the first – the immigrant – generation and whose second generation is either small in size or young in age. The "old" groups are those already established in the larger society, i.e. they have at least a high proportion of adult second and adult third or consecutive generations.

By this distinction it is incorrect and misleading to speak of all ethnic groups as if they were immigrants. Members of the old, established ethnic groups usually do not like to be confused with immigrants. The issues which these two types of ethnic groups pose are different. The concerns of the young groups can be characterized as essentially the problems of adjustment to society at large, whereas those of the old groups as interests of persistence.

Among the old ethnic groups in Canada one can include the British, French, German, Scandinavian groups, Dutch, Ukrainian, Russian, Polish, Jewish, Doukhobors, Mennonites, Indians, the Inuit, Blacks (except for those from the West Indies), Chinese, Japanese and others. Among the relatively young groups one can include the Greeks, Portuguese, various Latin American groups, East Indians (except for the Sikhs), and others.

In classifying ethnic groups as young and old, one should take regions into account. Groups which are old may be old in one region of the country but young in another. The Chinese, for example, are an old group in Western Canada but a young group in the Toronto area.

The old ethnic groups can be subdivided further into those which add significantly to their population by means of a relatively continuous stream of new immigrants and those who have no significant numbers of new immigration and hence can increase their population only by natural growth. Such groups as the French, native Peoples and Doukhobors and others are examples of the latter. Groups with a continuous stream of new immigration face special problems of interrelationship between the old and the new sectors of the ethnic community.

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Among such problems are the questions as to what extent the ethnic institutions and organizations established by the old community are able to serve the needs of the new immigrants, to what extent status or class differences between the old community and the new immigrant create tensions or conflict between them, to what extent the demands exerted on society by the new immigrants differ from or contradict the demands placed on it by the old community, etc.

### **Forms of Ethnic Identity**

Retention of ethnic identity from one generation to another does not necessarily mean retention of both its external and internal aspects or all the components of each aspect in the same degree. Some components may be retained more than others; some may not be retained at all. A member of the third generation may subjectively identify with his ethnic group without having knowledge of the ethnic language or without practising ethnic traditions or participating in ethnic organizations. Or, inversely, he or she may practice some ethnic traditions without having strong feelings of attachment to the group. Furthermore, the same components of external identity may acquire different subjective meaning for different generations, ethnic groups or other subgroups within the same ethnic group. Therefore, it should not be assumed that the ethnic identity retained by the third generation is of the same type or form of identity as that retained by the first or the second generation.

Furthermore, an ever increasing number of persons in North American societies acquire multiple ethnic identities. The relationship among these multiple identities can be varied, allowing for variation of types of identity complexes.

### **Variations in external and internal components of identity**

The differential variation of the components of ethnic identity thus allows us to distinguish various forms of ethnic identity. For example, a high level of retention of the practice of ethnic traditions accompanied by a low level of such subjective components as feelings of group obligation may be one form of ethnic identity: say, a *ritualistic ethnic identity*. By contrast, a high intensity of feelings of group obligation accompanied by a low level of practice of traditions would be a completely different form of ethnic identity: say, an *ideological identity* with different implications for the collective aspects of ethnic group behaviour. Negative images of one's own ethnic group accompanied by a high degree of awareness of one's ethnic ancestry, may be still another form of ethnic identity, a *rebellious identity*, and positive images of one's ancestral group accompanied by a frequent practice of highly selected traditions, particularly by the third or a consecutive generation, may be still another form of ethnic identity, that of *ethnic rediscovery*. A few selected images of one's ancestral group without any feelings of obligation toward it and with only occasional, recreational practice of some traditions may be still another form, say, *fringe identity*. This typology has an hypothetical character. It has to be empirically



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tested out. The study reported below indicates that there is empirical basis for at least some of these forms.

### Single and multiple identities

A multiethnic society inevitably produces multiple ethnic identities. As a rule these identities correspond directly to the objective aspect of ethnicity, that of ancestry. Single identity is usually defined as occurring when both parents are claimed to be of the same ethnicity. In a multiethnic society, however, over the span of generations those who identify only with the general society as the primary ethnic group, e.g., Canadian or American, without any knowledge of ancestors other than those of the general society can be said to have purely single identity. They, however, are most probably the exception rather than the rule (Lieberson and Waters 1990). All others can be said to possess multiple identities. These can be of two types, the typical hyphenated identities reflecting an individual's identification with both the society at large and his/her ancestral ethnicity or ethnicities and multiple identities of ancestral ethnicities themselves without direct reference to society at large. There is some empirical evidence, however, which indicates that individuals with multiple ancestral identities tend to choose one, the father's side identity, as more important to them (Breton et al. 1990, 275-276). This indicates that individuals tend to organize their multiple identities in some meaningful, hierarchical order. Different hierarchical types, however, are possible. To ascertain this, more research than what is available is necessary.

### **Changing ethnicity: reconstruction and deconstruction of ethnic identity<sup>1</sup>**

The objective and the subjective aspects of ethnicity are dynamically interrelated. The objective aspects are often the subjective aspects made "visible" through the usual sociological process of objectification and vice versa, the subjective aspects are meaningful reactions to the objective facts. It is important to understand the dynamics of this relationship if we are to understand the phenomenon of deconstruction and reconstruction of identity. In culturally pluralistic contexts, pressures are generated and exerted on the objective aspects of all ethnicities to become adaptable to each other. The process of deconstruction and reconstruction is the mechanism through which this is achieved. Deconstruction consists of some objective aspects of ethnic identity losing their meaning and use while others lose their meaning without being completely dropped or for others still the meaning may become latent. Deconstruction may be accompanied by negative attitudes toward one's ethnic group, feelings of alienation and the like. Although some objective patterns may be dropped and new patterns acquired from different cultural sources may become more meaningful, other patterns may continue to be meaningful and be retained. Similarly, at a certain point, one's ethnic background or group experience may acquire new meaning and be objectified into new visible ethnic patterns. It is more likely that over the generations selected old patterns would be revived but given new meaning. New collective experiences, in particular, often work to create new meanings for community-type groups. This



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is the process through which ethnic identity is reconstructed. Different types or forms of ethnic identity emerge, given different ethnicities, social status groups, generational cohorts, and periods of time. It is important to note that this process does not necessarily mean a disappearance of ethnicity. Rather, it involves the emergence of a variety of new forms of ethnic identity which are more adaptable to the surrounding social and cultural structures. These forms represent a reconstruction of ethnicity viable in a pluralistic setting. A study of ethnic identity of three generations of four major ethnic groups in Metropolitan Toronto confirms this theory. The study was part of a larger study of nine ethnic groups in Metropolitan Toronto which made use of a stratified, random sample of 2,338 respondents (Breton et al. 1990).

It should be remembered that the deconstruction and reconstruction of ethnicity is not only a phenomenon restricted to North American ethnic groups, but rather that it is a specific instance of a wider sociological process, one which has occurred behind many events in history. In North America, especially in the United States, it has taken on a specific form due particularly to two features of these societies: 1) large numbers and a great diversity of ethnicities and 2) a tendency to see one, "mainstream," socio-economic structure as the legitimate locus of aspirations for all groups, supported by strongly emphasized values of social mobility and achievement, and to view alternative socio-economic structures as marginal or deviant.

These conditions alone exert strong pressures to adapt one's identity in some way to that of others. As mentioned above, this may take the extreme form of consciously negating one's ethnic identity or of taking over aspects of the general dominant culture while retaining some selected elements of ethnic identity difference. Which of these elements are typically selected, if any, was the objective of the Toronto study. The study hypothesized that with each generation there will be a tendency to negotiate away the objective, external, aspects of ethnicity as well as those subjective, internal, aspects which may not be consonant with popular societal values and attitudes. The hypothesis was consistent with the symbolic ethnicity theory proposed in the seventies (Isajiw 1975, 1977; Yancey et al. 1976; Gans 1979; Crispino 1980). The results of the study, however, did not support this hypothesis completely.

In the first place, it is often assumed that first generation immigrants bring over with them and retain for long their entire ethnic baggage, i.e. all of their objective and subjective ethnic patterns. The study, however, showed that this is not necessarily the case. It used 25 indicators of ethnic identity and applied them to three generations of four ethnic groups: German, Italian, Jewish, and Ukrainian; and two generations of English. If all of the indicators are averaged out for the four groups, then 60 percent of the first generation, 45 percent of the second, and 31 percent of the third retain some combination of them (Breton et al. 1990, 84-85). This means that even though the first generation are very high retainers of their ethnic identities, the process of ethnic identity deconstructing already begins with them and most probably well before they arrive in the country. The conception of an ethnicity as complete, objective and non-symbolic upon arrival to North America, as some ethnicity theories seem to assume, is thus completely

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false. Ethnic groups in other parts of the world have been deconstructing and reconstructing their identities as a result of various pressures brought to bear on them from their very inception. Robert Redfield has pointed out that peasant societies over many years had to accommodate to urban pressures and influences to the point where their structure had become that of part - societies. Yet, their identity was modified in such a way as to become part of both worlds: they retained their own symbolic "moral order" and adopted the technical order of the city (Redfield 1953, 54-83; 1960, 23-39). Redfield clearly pointed to what I am here referring to as the process of the deconstruction and reconstruction of ethnicity.

The results of the Toronto study showed that there are certain indicators that can be considered to be foci of different forms of ethnic identity: 1) aspects of identity that are little retained by the third generation – in the range of 20 percent or less, 2) aspects of identity that are retained to a high degree by the third generation – in the range of 50 percent or more, and 3) aspects that are partially retained by the third generation – in the range between 20 and 50 percent. The first type can be considered as an indicator of deconstruction of ethnic identity; the second type, as an indicator of reconstruction; and the third type, as an indicator of either de- or reconstruction, depending on the ethnic group. It should be remembered that although they are based on the degree of retention of specific elements of ethnic identity, as construed here these are not to be understood as indicators of *retention* but of *deconstruction* and *reconstruction*. Thus, frequent use of one's mother tongue in the third generation, for example, is an indicator of deconstruction of identity and not one of its retention because overall the third generation retains it only in a very low degree. That is, only a small percentage of this generation still uses their ethnic language frequently, the rest have given it up but have not necessarily given up all other aspects of their ethnic identity as, for example, consumption of their ethnic food. They have thus deconstructed their ethnic identity. I will apply these indicators to both the subjective and the objective aspects of ethnic identity.

Among objective aspects, language can be an indicator of both de- and reconstruction of identity. Use of language as one's mother tongue is an indicator of deconstruction. On average, only about four percent of the third generation of all four ethnic groups studied considered ethnic language to be their mother tongue. Only seven percent of the third generation of all ethnic groups on the average used ethnic language frequently on a daily basis and 22 percent used it occasionally. However, for the 96 percent of the third generation who considered English to be their mother tongue, some knowledge of their ethnic language – such as phrases or single words – could be seen to be an indicator of reconstruction of their ethnicity. On average, 44 percent of the third generation of all four groups and 54 percent of three of these four groups had some knowledge of their ethnic language. Thus, the results show that ethnic language, over the generations, drops its practical function yet remains nonetheless in a new, simplified form and acquires a symbolic function. This finding would support the symbolic ethnicity theory.



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The single most significant indicator of ethnic identity reconstruction is the consumption of ethnic food. Two types of consumption were assessed in the study: consumption of ethnic food on holidays and special occasions, and consumption of ethnic food at times other than holidays and special occasions. The rationale behind these questions was to establish a difference between symbolic consumption and routine consumption. On average, 70 percent of the third generation of all four ethnic groups consumed ethnic food on holiday occasions, and 78 percent consumed it on more frequent occasions. This seems to indicate that consumption of ethnic food has both a lightly symbolic and a highly practical value which would partially disprove and partially support the symbolic ethnicity theory.

The second most important indicator of identity reconstruction is the possession of ethnic art objects. An average of 61 percent of the third generation of all four ethnic groups studied possessed some objects of ethnic art in their homes. These objects carry high symbolic value. As in the case of ethnic food consumption, they are objective aspects of ethnic identity which allow maximum choice as to the type and number acquired. The high incidence of the possession of ethnic art objects amongst the third generation gives perhaps the most direct support to the symbolic ethnicity theory.

Two indices of objective aspects of ethnic identity may serve as indicators of either its de- or reconstruction. These are having close friends of the same ethnicity and the observance of ethnic customs. With regards to ethnic friendships, having a large number of close friends is an indicator of deconstruction as was the case with language. Thus, on the average, only 17 percent of the third generation of all four groups studied had three or more close friends of the same ethnicity. The percentage more than doubles when the question relates to one or two close friends of the same ethnicity. Thus, 36 percent of the third generation of all groups and 40 percent of three of the four groups, on average, had close friends of the same ethnicity. Since the percentages do not come out to 50, this is not a strong indicator of ethnic identity reconstruction. Nevertheless, it does seem to point to the fact that in terms of close ethnic friendships formed by the third generation, the identity reconstructed involves few rather than many close ethnic friends. The friendship indicator, thus, only partially supports the symbolic ethnicity theory since friendship is not a symbolic matter but refers to real, daily needs.

The observance of ethnic customs is also an in-between indicator. On average, 48 percent of the third generation observe some ethnic customs at one time or another. It is not clear to what extent this can be an indicator of de- or reconstruction but since it falls almost in the 50 percent range, one may say that it does serve the function of reconstruction, although ethnic group variations may be a significant factor here. In other words, in the reconstructed forms of ethnicity the observance of some ethnic customs would be included but not necessarily so.

Questions on attitudes and feelings of obligation towards one's ethnic group were asked to test the retention of subjective, internal aspects of ethnic identity. Of the questions asked, feelings



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of obligation to marry within the group stands out as an indicator of deconstruction. On the average, only 19 percent of the third generation of the four groups studied felt endogamous marriage to be an obligation. However, only four percent of the three groups felt this to be so. But for the remaining group, this index was a criterion for reconstruction, 66 percent of its third generation on average. Thus, for most groups, the reconstructed forms of ethnic identity exclude marriage within the group and assume that ethnic identity can persist accompanied by intermarriage. All of the other attitudes and feelings of obligation can be considered to be in-between indicators. On the average, 46 percent of the third generation of all four groups studied felt that it is important to help members of their ethnic group to find a job if they were able to aid them. This is the only component of the subjective aspects of ethnic identity that comes close to the 50 percent range. The other components, i.e. feelings that it is important to support ethnic group causes and to teach children the ethnic language, average 36 percent and 34 percent respectively. These findings show that there are no strong indicators of subjective aspects of ethnic identity reconstruction. This does not mean that these subjective aspects may not play a role since in terms of our definition these are intermediate indicators. Nevertheless, on the overall group level, they do not seem to have an outstanding role.

To sum up, the most outstanding indicators of ethnic identity deconstruction are low retention and little use of ethnic language as mother tongue, low incidence of numerous, close ethnic friendships and the low incidence of feelings of obligation to marry within one's own ethnic group. The most outstanding indicators of ethnic identity reconstruction are a high incidence of ethnic food consumption, a high incidence of the possession of ethnic art objects, a high incidence of some knowledge of ethnic language expressions and words and a high incidence of having only one or at best two close friends of the same ethnicity. There were, however, significant variations of identity retention among the four groups studied. The Jewish group showed the highest overall retention, the German group showed the lowest. This indicates variations in which ethnicity is deconstructed and reconstructed among different ethnic groups.

The indicators of reconstruction thus present a picture of the form that ethnic identity acquires as it accommodates itself to other identities and external pressures. This form may be the most relevant to the kind of social structure and technological culture typifying our society. My original hypothesis in the study was that reconstructed ethnic identity would emphasize the subjective aspects more and exclude most objective aspects. However, this did not prove to be the case. The objective aspects mentioned here are much stronger indicators of reconstructed identity than are the subjective ones. These objective elements are relatively few in number, yet they appear to have high symbolic value. To this extent, the study supports the symbolic ethnicity theory but does not support it to the extent that these objective items do play a practical role in the everyday life of individuals. In other words, changing ethnicity in North American societies may mean its erosion but just as much it means a deconstruction of an old identity and a reconstruction of a new form of ethnic identity that is viable in face of the pressures and needs of a pluralistic, technological, stratified, mobility-oriented society (Isajiw 1977).

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### **Conclusion**

This paper began with the assumption that any empirical research on ethnicity must derive its operational measures from a thorough theoretical understanding of what ethnicity is. To this effect, the paper briefly reviewed the main approaches to ethnicity in the sociological literature in the past 20 years, then proceeded to define ethnicity, ethnic group and ethnic identity, to distinguish types of ethnic groups and forms of ethnic identity and to examine ethnicity in the process of change. Results of an empirical study were used to obtain a more realistic picture of how ethnicity changes over the span of three generations. The findings of the empirical study are useful in drawing attention to variations in the character of ethnicity depending on ethnic group, generation and other conditions. The scholar of ethnicity must be as much aware of the varying conditions of ethnicity and variations in the nature of ethnicity over time as of all the conceptual distinctions and theoretical possibilities regarding it. If empirical research, be it a census or other study, requires that a limited choice of operational indicators be made, it is essential that it be made with a full knowledge of how it will bear on all the aspects of ethnicity and how it will limit the scope to which one could relate the consequent findings. This is the value that theory has for any research. But for the study of ethnicity this is particularly important because the field has a tendency to be strongly affected by various popular preconceptions of the meaning of ethnicity, by strong feelings about it or by biases. Theoretical discipline is essential if one is to maintain a scientific level.

### **Note**

1. This section derives from a paper presented at the 86th annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, titled: "The Deconstruction and Reconstruction of Ethnicity in Culturally Diverse Societies."

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# **Impact of Data Needs**



# *Canadian Data on Ethnic Origin: Who Needs It and Why?*

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## **Introduction**

Ethnicity as a social and political construct is firmly entrenched in Canadian society. Multiculturalism in its various forms (i.e. linguistic, racial, ancestral and religious) is part of the fibre of Canadian society. This is recognized through legislation such as the Multiculturalism Act (1988), The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Official Languages Act and the Employment Equity Act (1986) as well as through the financial and program support provided to ethnic communities and through the recognition of religious freedom in the Canadian Constitution.

As a national statistical agency, the mandate of Statistics Canada includes the collection, analysis and dissemination of information on the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the population. The recognized effectiveness of this organization in fulfilling its mandate is due in no small measure to the relevance and quality of the information it provides and to the degree to which it conducts its activities in an unbiased and scientific manner.

This paper begins by setting the context for discussing data needs. It then examines the legal and program criteria which drive the collection of data on ethnicity. This discussion is accompanied by a brief description of the clients for the data. Next, the paper addresses how the clients' data needs are addressed and what mechanisms are used to define the content and form of the questions to be used. Some of the limitations and dimensions of data on ethnicity and the sensitivities that have been raised as a result of the manner in which they were applied are described in the conclusion to this paper.

## **The Context**

It is important to set the context for the subsequent discussion on the needs and the clients for data on ethnicity. First, it must be noted that as a national statistical agency, Statistics Canada is essentially a supplier of data on ethnicity. This agency does not have specific program or policy applications for the data.

What is meant by ethnicity is a fundamental question which has been addressed by many prominent social scientists (for recent examples see Alba 1990; Barth 1969; Cohen 1978; Lieberman 1988; Waters 1990). Since this topic is dealt with in detail in the Canadian "National



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Experiences Paper", the discussion will not be repeated here. However, when reading this paper the reader must keep in mind the issues concerning the definitions and dimensions of ethnicity.

Question wording and questionnaire design are not simply methodological issues (Pryor et al. 1992; White 1991). The positions and options presented by ethnic groups with respect to classification, concepts and the actual text of the questions and response categories are the subject of substantial debate fuelled to some degree by the political agenda of the participants. Some of the tensions evident in the current constitutional debate in Canada revolve around language and national identity and these are reflected in the expression of data needs of individual groups.

Representative data on mother tongue, official languages, ethnic origin and identity and aboriginal origins and identity are crucial in the current debates about constitutional reform, the preservation of Canada's official languages and the relationship between the aboriginal population and the rest of Canadian society. Statistics Canada, like any other national statistical agency, strives to be objective and impartial in its data collection activities. It also maintains an arm's length relationship with government, thereby ensuring that its approach is scientific and professional. However, the validity of the classification systems that are applied to the data is being debated publicly. For example, some media were involved in a campaign to encourage respondents to report their ethnic origin as "Canadian" during the 1991 Census. Also, native organizations are publicly questioning the legal and quasi-legal definitions of who is an Indian (Frideres 1988, 6-17).

Clearly, the debates surrounding ethnicity are both emotionally and scientifically based. The expression of data needs is also scientifically and emotionally based. This complicates the process of establishing a consensus among users of the data.

### **Information requirements**

Ethnicity is viewed as an important variable when analyzing phenomena such as fertility and population growth, income distributions and employment practices, family composition and support networks, education, migration (both internal and international) and the relationships between subgroups of the population. Unquestionably, there is a great deal of academic and community interest in data on ethnic origin. However, there are legal and program imperatives that have a significant impact on which data are collected and in what form. In their examination of future issues for the Canadian census, Pryor, Goldmann and Royce refer to the fact that "Constitutionally, Canada is unambiguously a multicultural society, including an important native or aboriginal peoples component" (Pryor et al. 1991). This has been further reinforced with the passage of the Multiculturalism Act (1988) and the subsequent elevation of the ministry of Multiculturalism to a full federal department.

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The formal recognition of the multicultural nature of Canadian society raises concerns of racial and gender equality, discrimination and cultural preservation. Canada has instituted legislation to address these and other related issues. The Employment Equity Act (1986) is designed to ensure that no citizen is denied employment opportunities as result of their gender, ethnic or racial origins, aboriginal origins or physical and emotional limitations. The Act designates "women, aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities and persons who are, because of their race or colour, in a visible minority in Canada" as target groups for which employers must provide equitable opportunities. Employers are obliged to demonstrate that they have provided adequate employment opportunities to the members of these groups. The benchmarks against which employers' performances are measured are based partially on census data.

It is common practice with most public administrations to use counts of the target populations to determine the extent and nature of the services to be provided. The Indian Act serves as the basic legislative instrument to define the relationship between Canada's native population and the federal government. James Frideres unambiguously describes the impact of the Act in the following statement: "Its importance cannot be exaggerated nor can its influence be minimized" (Frideres 1988, 25). The administration of this Act, as well as other programs geared to Canada's aboriginal people, requires timely and accurate data on their demographic, social and economic condition.

Not only is Canada a cultural mosaic but it is also a bilingual country in practice and by legislation. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Official Languages Act designate English and French as Canada's two official languages. Furthermore, the Multiculturalism Act (1988) and The Charter recognize the importance of minority and heritage languages. The administration of these acts and the programs associated with them require data on the linguistic, ethno-cultural and immigration characteristics of the population.

Since the focus of this conference is the measurement of ethnicity, no attempt has been made in this section to provide a complete enumeration of all legal and program requirements for information from Statistics Canada such as that which support the administration of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act and the Fiscal Arrangements Act.

To complete the discussion of information needs it is necessary to consider the commercial uses for data on ethnicity. Target marketing which focuses on specific subgroups of the population is a growth activity in Canada. Many direct marketing organizations will tailor their campaigns to specific ethnic groups. In addition, some manufacturing and distribution establishments will tailor products or packaging for specific ethnic groups. Kosher products for the Jewish community and Halal products for the Moslem community are two examples of this type of activity. There is also an observed growth in the number and range of ethnic restaurants, ethnic media and services geared specifically towards selected ethnic communities.



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Although no consensus has been reached on which definitions and classifications to use, there is unanimity on the need for, and value of, data on ethnicity.<sup>1</sup> Analyses of social and economic activity routinely include cross-classifications by age, gender and ethnic or racial origins. It is not unusual to see statistics on employment, income levels, education, family status, crime victimization, criminal activity or migration cross-tabulated with ethnic origin. Ethnic origin is also used in the definition of selected subgroups of the population, such as visible minorities.

### **Who are the Clients?**

Clients for information on ethnicity come from every sector of activity. Their needs are as varied as their interests. This has an impact not only on the content but also on the form and medium on which it is provided and the level of detail, both geographical and classification, of the information presented.

### **Public Sector**

Departments and agencies at all levels of government use data on ethnic origin for policy planning and formulation, for monitoring programs aimed at subgroups of the population and for administering legislation that deals with minority and other designated groups. For example, to administer the Employment Equity Act (1986) counts of visible minorities are derived, in part, from ethnic origin data from the census by Employment and Immigration Canada and the Treasury Board Secretariat. Also, Multiculturalism Canada relies on counts of the population by ethnic group to develop programs in support of specific cultural communities.

### **Advisory Groups**

Public policy development in Canada is influenced to a significant extent by a number of advisory committees and councils. The Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women has as its mandate "to advise the government and inform the public on matters of interest and concern to women" (CACSW 1990). One of their stated activities is to focus on the situation of women from racial and ethnic minority groups. The Canadian Ethnocultural Council (CEC) is an organization whose role is to advise the government on matters related to multiculturalism. Approximately 40 ethnic communities are represented on the CEC through their national offices. Both these organizations are supported by public funding.

### **Ethnic Communities and Special Interest Groups**

In addition, ethnic communities and special interest groups support national organizations that play an indirect, although very important, role in shaping public policy. For example, the Assembly of First Nations, which grew out of the National Indian Brotherhood, is the primary national Indian organization which speaks for registered Indians in Canada. They are currently



involved in negotiations of treaty rights and constitutional amendments and make significant use of data to support these activities. Similarly, the Canadian Jewish Congress is an umbrella organization representing all the Jewish communities in Canada. It is instrumental in setting policy for the Jewish communities and in influencing the public agenda with respect to Jews in Canada. It too relies heavily on data from sources such as the census in planning programs and actions.

It would be improper to leave the impression that these data are used solely by federal departments and agencies and national organizations. Canada's mosaic is also reflected in the local community and cultural organizations that support and perpetuate ethnic diversity. One does not need to travel far in this country to see evidence of local ethnic activity and diversity. As ethnic groups established themselves in Canada they developed communal and fraternal organizations to support their cultural activities. These organizations act as foci for community planning, support, education, political representation and social activities. One can find ethnic community centres in most major cities in Canada. The Greek, German, Jewish, Armenian, Chinese, Ukrainian and Vietnamese communities, to name a few, have well-organized and well-established networks of support and cultural centres across Canada. Data on Canada's ethnic and cultural characteristics are an essential source of information for these community organizations. They serve not only to locate the members of a particular group but also to indicate the scope and nature of the programs required.

### **The Media**

The issues of racial discrimination, visible minorities, immigration, multiculturalism and the ethnic diversity of Canadian society have been, and are, the focus of substantial public debate and media attention. Periodicals such as *L'actualité* and *Maclean's* routinely carry stories about ethnic groups and members of visible minority groups. Events such as the debate about Canada's immigration policies, alleged racial discrimination by law enforcement agencies and the growth of nationalism ensure that information about the ethnic composition of Canada continuously surfaces in daily newscasts and newspapers. The media have, as a result of this focus, become major consumers of information on the ethnic, racial and cultural characteristics of our population.

### **The Academic Community**

Social scientists often conduct solicited and unsolicited research, either in response to specific requests and contracts or to support academic inquiries. Their analyses touch on the status of specific groups, their interactions with others and with the traditional support systems and the impact of programs and policies on ethnic communities. In her assessment of ethno-cultural data in the General Social Survey, Monica Boyd highlights the fact that the study of the interrelationships between ethnic groups is "well entrenched in Canada". She goes on to state:

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The term 'multicultural mosaic' not only refers to the diverse ethno-cultural character of Canada's population but also to the differential access of such groups to popularly assumed resources and entitlements such as health, family, education, jobs and economic security. Far from being the domain of academics, documentation and analysis of ethno-culturally based inequalities often are essential for the delivery of social services and for the development of government programs targeted at specific ethno-cultural groups. (Boyd 1990, 2)

### **Collection Vehicles**

Data on ethnic origin are considered to be a basic classification variable on most surveys that examine the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the population. The level of geographic detail tends to vary with the collection vehicle. However, the classification systems used to categorize the responses tend to be consistent with those of the most recent census of population.

### **The Census**

The primary vehicle for collecting these data, and the only one which provides information for small areas, is the census of population. The history of census-taking in Canada is divided into two periods: the pre-Confederation period (1665 to 1867) and the post-Confederation period (1871 to the present day). Questions on ethnic and racial origins appeared on most pre-Confederation censuses. However, during the early periods of settlement, the population was essentially French or aboriginal. As settlers began to arrive from countries in the British Isles and other parts of Europe, the population gained a multicultural profile. In the mid-eighteenth century, the scope of the questions on ethnic origin was expanded to reflect the multicultural composition of the population. As Canada's population grew and diversified, so did the questions dealing with ethno-cultural characteristics. Questions on ethnic origin have appeared in every census of the post-Confederation period with the exception of the Census of 1891 (Priest 1990). The questions have evolved over time to reflect the changing composition of Canadian society.<sup>2</sup> The issue of historical comparability of the data has been the subject of significant debate and has been well documented (see Boyd 1990; Goldmann 1991). It will not be addressed in this paper.

### **The General Social Survey**

In 1984 Statistics Canada initiated the General Social Survey (GSS) with the objectives of gathering data on a broad range of trends in Canadian society and of providing information on current and emerging issues which may have a bearing on social policy. Each survey is designed to include three modules: one containing basic demographic and socio-economic variables (classification content), one dealing with a particular theme such as health or time use



(core content) and one focusing on specific issues such as social networks or language knowledge and use (focus content).

The GSS is an annual survey in which the core content and the focus content vary from cycle to cycle. The classification content, which includes the ethno-cultural variables, remains constant. The text of the question used to obtain data on ethnic origin is identical to that which appeared on the 1986 Census.<sup>3</sup> However, starting with cycle 3 in 1987, some modifications were introduced to the precoded response categories. It should be noted that ethnicity is not included in the most recent cycle of the GSS.

### **Other Sources**

Data on ethnic origin are often collected as classification variables in many of the other surveys that examine the socio-economic status of Canadians. For example, a question on ethnic origin appears periodically in the annual Labour Market Activity Survey (last conducted in January 1991). Questions on ethnic origin have also been included in the following one-time surveys: Literacy Survey (October 1989), Survey of Smoking Patterns (March 1990), National Alcohol and Drug Survey (March 1989) and the Follow-up of the 1986 Graduates (March 1991).

Some programs use data on ethnic origin as input in deriving other classifications. For instance, in the Employment Equity program, the classification of visible minorities is derived from census data on ethnic origin. They also rely on data from specific administrative surveys conducted within organizations. Since the Employment Equity Program is primarily concerned with identifying those who are members of the four designated groups (aboriginal people, visible minorities, women and those who suffer either mental or physical limitations), the surveys conducted in support of the program do not specifically ask for ethnic origin. Instead, they ask whether or not the respondent considers themselves to be a member of one of the designated groups.

It is important to note, at this point, that all the collection vehicles referred to in this section rely on the respondent's perception of their ethnic origin. The respondent may be guided to a limited extent by the instructions provided or by the interviewer (in the case of interviewer-administered surveys such as the GSS). However, the ultimate response is based on self-identification and perception.

### **How are the Needs Addressed?**

The social science community is diverse in its requirements for data on ethnicity. Its emphasis can range from being interested in ethnic origin as a primary focus for study and research to classifying subpopulations by ethnic origin in order to study other socio-economic characteristics and phenomena such as migration, immigration, language, education, economic development,



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etc. The range of applications for the data is as varied and diverse as the ethnic composition of the population. This is further confounded by the fact that no consensus exists among social scientists on the definitions or the classifications applied to data on ethnicity. Ideally, the research community would prefer simple ethnic categories that are constant over time, that are exclusive and non-overlapping and with each respondent having only one ethnicity. However, based on recent experiences with the increase in multiple responses this is an impossibility. The proportion of respondents reporting more than one ethnic origin increased from 11 percent in the 1981 Census to 28 percent in the 1986 Census (Pryor et al. 1992).

Question and questionnaire-content development follows a life cycle which builds on existing knowledge and experiences. Generally, the stages in the cycle include:

1. an assessment of the program requirements for the data, including all federal programs, specific federal/provincial agreements, existing (confirmed) client programs (in the research, academic and private sectors) and legal and policy requirements;
2. an evaluation of previous collections of these data;
3. consultation with clients for the data and with respondents;
4. consultation with advisory committees;
5. questionnaire testing and development; and
6. formal approval of the content, including the text of the questions, respondent guides and classification lists.

The degree of emphasis on each stage will vary with the nature of the collection vehicle. For example, when a survey is being conducted for a specific audience (usually on a cost-recovery basis), the consultations are limited to that audience. However, to assure analytic consistency every attempt is made to ensure that, even in these circumstances, the concepts that are applied are in harmony with the other collection activities that deal with the same or similar content.

The most extensive application of this life cycle was during the development of the content for the 1991 Census. This experience will, therefore, be used as a case study to illustrate how the process was applied.

Planning for the 1991 Census began with an international conference organized by Statistics Canada in October 1985. In his welcoming address Dr. Fellegi observed that "the interaction and exchange of ideas which will take place during this week will provide the catalyst for much of our work during the next five years" (Statistics Canada 1987).

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He went on to suggest that environment for census-taking was changing dramatically with respect to the content and to the methods of collecting and processing the data. He also suggested that the tolerance of respondents towards the perceived intrusion into their personal lives as a result of data-gathering activities was being taxed to the limit. In the context of data on ethnicity this proved to be a prophetic (and possibly understated) observation.

Federal programs tend to derive their mandate from legislation or policy. For instance, all programs which deal with multiculturalism are, in some way, mandated by the Multiculturalism Act. Similarly, all policies and programs that are concerned with employment equity derive their mandate from the Employment Equity legislation. A complete review of current and planned legislation was conducted in order to establish the requirement for census data on ethnicity for these and other federal programs. Furthermore, specific bilateral consultations were held with each of the departments and agencies concerned with administering and monitoring these programs.

The fluidity of ethnicity as a social construct is becoming increasingly recognized by the social science community. As early as 1969 Frederic Barth indicated that ethnicity was subjective and that the definition of group boundaries was a function of the interaction between groups at a given point in time (Barth 1969). More recently, the term ethnicity has been qualified with descriptors such as "contemporary fluidity" (Alba 1990, 24). In their monograph for the 1980 U.S. Census, Lieberman and Waters state that associations with ethnic groups are not fixed over time (Lieberman 1988, 22) and in his work on race and ethnicity Vic Satzewich suggests that it is not possible to classify people by phenotypical characteristics (Satzewich 1990, 253). If one examines the content of past censuses it can be seen that the questions on ethnicity have evolved to reflect the changing ethnic composition of Canadian society. As a result, in preparing for 1991, the scope of the evaluation of previous ethnicity data collections was limited to the 1986 Census.

In the past, Statistics Canada consulted primarily with its major clients when developing the content of a survey or census. For 1991, however, it was decided to expand the scope of consultations to include a series of public meetings across Canada as well as specific discussions with special interest groups, community organizations, research organizations and Parliamentary committees. It can truly be said that the concepts of ethnicity were debated in public. This process received a great deal of media attention and, in particular, the issues of what is meant by ethnic origin, is "Canadian" an ethnicity and, if so, "who is a Canadian?" were the focus of many articles and editorials (see Statistics Canada 1988).

The consultative process included meetings with Statistics Canada's Advisory Committees on Social Conditions, Labour, Demography and Language. Members of these committee include noted international experts in their respective fields from the academic community and the private sector.



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A report summarizing the results of the consultations was prepared with the objectives of identifying alternatives to be considered for census content and of making recommendations for the questionnaire-testing and -development process. It was noted in this report that over 80 percent of the comments received suggested that the existing question dealing with ethnic origin should be separated into three questions focusing on ancestry, identity and race respectively (Statistics Canada 1988, 44). The report also highlighted that the inclusion or exclusion of "Canadian" as a precoded mark box on the questionnaire would become a contentious issue.

The consultative process and the research conducted on previous censuses defined the parameters for the question-testing and -development phase. To summarize two years of development, variants of all three questions identified through the consultative process were tested using quantitative and qualitative methods. The results of the tests were discussed with selected individuals and groups who have a direct interest in the data. This process is described in detail in "Measuring ethnicity: is Canadian an evolving indigenous category" (Pryor et al. 1992) and in Canada's "National Experience Paper" (White et al. 1992).

Following questionnaire development and testing, the proposed content for the census was submitted to Cabinet for final approval. The philosophy adopted by Statistics Canada in recommending a given approach is best summarized in the following statement made by Bruce Petrie to the Standing Committee on Multiculturalism prior to finalizing the content of the census: "In determining how we can best collect the desired data we must assure ourselves that the results will be reliable and have utility, and we must do the job in a way that will not offend respondents or introduce risk to the rest of the census" (Petrie 1988).

Because of its impact, both direct and indirect, the process by which data needs are established is somewhat more elaborate for the census. However, the general principles described above are applied, in whole or in part, for most collections that Statistics Canada undertakes.

Information needs are addressed not only through the development of collection vehicles but also through the design of the products and services through the data are disseminated. For the census, as with other statistical programs, the principal clients are consulted on their requirements for both the content of the data products as well as the media on which they are presented. In this context, determining the content is not a simple issue. Factors such as level of detail in classification and geography must be taken into account, as must the other variables with which these data will be cross-classified. This process results in the definition of a "standard" product line in both print and electronic formats.

In addition, the capability to respond to special ad hoc requests is an important part of the service provided to clients. Although no specific statistics are available, anecdotal evidence confirms that ethnicity is one of the major variables requested as a component of cross-classified



tables. Clients for data frequently request tables cross-classified by demographic characteristics and by ethnic group.

## **Conclusion**

Ethnicity, as a concept, has many dimensions. In their monograph on the Hispanic population of the United States, Frank Bean and Marta Tienda state that "... it is impossible to define ethnicity simply as a collection of ascriptive traits" (Bean 1987, 8). It touches on an individual's identity, their heritage, the groups with whom they associate and their immediate surroundings. It also has political significance. Richard Alba observed that "... ethnicity becomes important in the political sphere, as ethnic groups become interest groups, representing and reflecting the interests of many similarly situated individuals" (Alba 1990, 28).

The process of determining the content for the 1991 Census reinforced, once again, the sensitivity of the debates surrounding the significance and meaning of data on ethnicity. A key issue, which has been the subject of substantial debate among "experts," is the degree to which it is possible, or reasonable, to draw comparisons of ethnic groups over time. It has been argued that ethnic groups evolve as they develop and as their interaction with other communities develop. It follows that the dimensions of, and boundaries between, ethnic groups change over time. Given this dynamic scenario, is it reasonable to create a time series of data on ethnic origin or ethnic identity?

The corollary to this argument is that the dynamic nature of ethnicity would be reflected in a time series. The changing distributions between ethnic groups and the emergence of new groups or new combinations of groups (if one includes multiple responses in the analysis) would become evident in a time series, assuming that the collection vehicle remains constant. It cannot be denied that multiple responses to ethnic origin are increasing. This is supported by the fact that the rate of intergroup marriage is increasing in Canada. According to an analysis of data from the 1981 Census conducted by Bali Ram, almost 37 percent of foreign-born women marry men of different origins and close to 43 percent of foreign-born men marry women of different origins (Ram 1990, 215). As stated by Krotki and Odynak "... multi-ethnicities are the outcome of intermarriages" (Krotki 1990, 417). Given the empirical evidence it is likely that this trend will continue to grow.

Both positions were expressed very strongly during the various phases of consultation on the content of the 1991 Census. The view which prevailed was in favour of a limited degree of historical comparability. However, if one examines the history of census-taking in Canada, it is obvious that the questions evolved in the past to reflect the changing ethnic composition of Canadian society. Historically, there is no precise time series of census data on ethnicity due to changes in the questions and processing methodology. This point notwithstanding, a number of researchers continue to perform trend analyses and comparisons over time of ethnic groups.

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This is an issue over which there has been significant debate in the past and which will continue to be debated for the foreseeable future.

Examples abound of analyses that have cross-classified other socio-economic and demographic characteristics with ethnic and racial origin. Ethnic communities routinely perform such analyses to determine how they fare in relation their neighbouring groups. Recognizing the multicultural composition of Canadian society, special interest groups generally subclassify the population by ethnic categories in order to determine the impact of program delivery and where their emphasis must be directed. Public organizations and institutions are also very conscious of the multicultural nature of the clients they serve.

The publishing of analyses of specific characteristics by ethnic group is a very sensitive issue. It can be termed, in some circles, as an "anti-need". When data on income distributions classified by ethnic group were released, a number of ethnic communities took exception, not with the data but with the stereotypical image that the results propagated. For instance, the data showed that the members of the Jewish ethnic group were among the highest earners in Canada. The Canadian Jewish Congress protested the release of these data on the grounds that they didn't take into account other characteristics such as education and employment status and that they reinforced a prejudicial view of Jews.

In a similar vein, it was proposed to collect data on race and ethnicity for those who had some interaction with the criminal justice system. When the proposal came to public attention, the media published a series of editorials falling on both sides of the argument. A workshop of noted experts in the field was organized to discuss this issue and to make recommendations to Statistics Canada and to the Canadian justice community. The participants in the workshop recognized the fact that this isn't a simple binary issue (i.e. there isn't a right and a wrong answer). They recognized that the views of those who collect the statistics, those who use the statistics and those who are affected by the statistics need to be considered and balanced when making a decision (Doob 1991). The controversy surrounding this issue is certainly not over, especially given the allegations of racial discrimination against some police forces in Canada.

Most of the discussion in this paper has centred around census data which, because of its coverage and regularity, can be considered a special case. However, one must also consider how can the collection of data on ethnicity be addressed in sample surveys.

As sample size decreases, the likelihood of missing respondents from small ethnic groups or from some of the newer groups increases. This is true to some extent even for census data. In detailed cross-tabulations for small geographic areas it is often the case that some of the smaller groups will not appear on their own but rather as part of an aggregate category. For example, in the 1986 Census 14,470 respondents indicated an ethnic origin (single response) of Icelandic at the national level. For the province of New Brunswick, that number drops to 30. If one

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looks at the data for selected municipalities in New Brunswick, the population declaring Icelandic origins will only appear as part of the aggregate "European Origins." This problem is amplified for sample surveys where the probability that they will not be included in the sample is dramatically increased.

Although Statistics Canada is not a primary user of data on ethnicity (in all its dimensions), we have an interest in creating a better understanding among the research community of how the data are constructed and what their limitations are.

### **Notes**

1. The term ethnicity, in all its ambiguity, is used intentionally. It refers to the full range of definitions, classifications and interpretations of ethnic or cultural origin and ethnic or cultural identity.
2. The ethno-cultural questions that appeared in all post-Confederation Censuses are described in *Canadian Census Ethno-Cultural Questions, 1871 - 1991*. Statistics Canada 1991. Uncatalogued Publication. Ottawa: Centre for Ethnic Measurement.
3. The question as well as the coding structure and response categories are described in Canada's "National Experiences Paper" co-authored by Pamela White, Jane Badets and Viviane Renaud.



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# *Impact of Ethnic Data Needs in the United States*

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## **Introduction**

There are many possible definitions of ethnicity (Isajiw 1974), all which have merit and problems. We attempted *post hoc* to find a definition of ethnicity that more or less fits what the U.S. Census Bureau does to collect data about the ethnic composition of the U.S. population. We will use Lowry's (1984, 43) definition of ethnicity as the "... social identity ... which derives from belonging to a group whose members share a common race, religion, language or national origin or some combination of these factors." One problem with this definition is that it does not tell us how a group is formed. Isajiw (1974, 122) tells us that this sense of "belonging" can arise during socialization or as a result of being identified as a member of that group by others which can, in turn, "stimulate self-identification." This is important because the U.S. Census Bureau has relied on ethnic self-identification in the census since 1960 (Lowry 1984, 47). Another problem is with the use of "group" in the definition. Petersen (1980, 234) reminds us that a group "has some degree of coherence and solidarity" while "a subpopulation, category, grouping, aggregate, bracket, or sector ... denote no more than a patterned differentiation." In this sense, the Census Bureau's racial and ethnic groups are subpopulations or categories rather than groups with coherence and solidarity. Unfortunately, Petersen's suggestion of "nation" or "subnation" as the proper term for these groupings is awkward to use. In any case, we do not necessarily endorse the views expressed in the cited works in the discussion that follows but we feel they clearly express the difficulties inherent the U.S. Census Bureau's efforts to collect and publish ethnic data.

The United States has collected "ethnic" data in one form or another on census and survey questionnaires since at least 1850 and race data since the first census in 1790 (Lowry 1984, 46-48; McKenney and Cresce 1990, 11). The interest in and the controversy associated with the public and private use of ethnic data, however, has expanded greatly during the last two or three decades (Lowry 1984, 48-51). We will focus most of the discussion on three items – race, Hispanic origin and ancestry – which are the principal identifiers of ethnicity currently used by the Census Bureau. In the sections that follow we will discuss the need for ethnic data in the United States, how the Census Bureau finds out about and attempts to meet these needs, how it targets special populations and the need for comparability. We end with a summary and discussion of the advantages and disadvantages inherent in this process.

## Census Bureau Determination of the Needs for Ethnic Information in the United States

The basic need for ethnic information in the United States comes from essentially three sources: federal legislation, federal, state and local government program requirements and finally what we call "private uses." Before we discuss the needs for ethnic data, it might be useful to briefly review the sources of these data. The 1990 Census of Population and Housing contained several questions eliciting various aspects of what we will term "ethnicity" in this paper: race, Hispanic origin, ancestry, place of birth and language. (see figures 1-5) The first three are the primary "ethnic" identifiers but the latter can help us in the interpretation of ambiguous entries in the former, as well as providing a richer set of ethnic information. The Census Bureau does not collect information on religion, although it would be valuable in making some ethnic group distinctions more clear (see Lieberman and Waters 1988, 10). Petersen (1980, 237), for example, noted the strong opposition generated by the proposal to include a religious affiliation question on the 1960 Census.

1. Race (question 4 was asked of all respondents).

**Figure 1. Race Question for the 1990 Census**

<p><b>4. Race</b> Fill ONE circle for the race that the person considers himself/herself to be.</p> <p>If <b>Indian (Amer.)</b>, print the name of the enrolled or principal tribe.→</p>     <p>If <b>Other Asian or Pacific Islander (API)</b>, print one group, for example: Hmong, Fijian, Laotian, Thai, Tongan, Pakistani, Cambodian, and so on.→</p>  <p>If <b>Other race</b>, print race.→</p>	<p><input type="radio"/> White <input type="radio"/> Black or Negro <input type="radio"/> Indian (Amer.) (Print the name of the enrolled or principal tribe.)</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; margin: 5px 0;"></div> <p><input type="radio"/> Eskimo <input type="radio"/> Aleut</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Asian or Pacific Islander (API)</u></p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"><tr><td><input type="radio"/> Chinese</td><td><input type="radio"/> Japanese</td></tr><tr><td><input type="radio"/> Filipino</td><td><input type="radio"/> Asian Indian</td></tr><tr><td><input type="radio"/> Hawaiian</td><td><input type="radio"/> Samoan</td></tr><tr><td><input type="radio"/> Korean</td><td><input type="radio"/> Guamanian</td></tr><tr><td><input type="radio"/> Vietnamese</td><td><input type="radio"/> Other API ↓</td></tr></table> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; margin: 5px 0;"></div> <p><input type="radio"/> Other race (Print race) ↑</p>	<input type="radio"/> Chinese	<input type="radio"/> Japanese	<input type="radio"/> Filipino	<input type="radio"/> Asian Indian	<input type="radio"/> Hawaiian	<input type="radio"/> Samoan	<input type="radio"/> Korean	<input type="radio"/> Guamanian	<input type="radio"/> Vietnamese	<input type="radio"/> Other API ↓
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<input type="radio"/> Korean	<input type="radio"/> Guamanian										
<input type="radio"/> Vietnamese	<input type="radio"/> Other API ↓										

#### Instructions for Question 4

Fill ONE circle for the race each person considers himself/herself to be.

If you fill the "Indian (Amer.)" circle, print the name of the tribe or tribes in which the person is enrolled. If the person is not enrolled in a tribe, print the name of the principal tribe(s).

If you fill the "Other API" circle [under Asian or Pacific Islander (API)], only print the name of the group to which the person belongs. For example, the "Other API" category includes persons who identify as Burmese, Fijia Hmong, Indonesian, Laotian, Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Tongan, Thai, Cambodian, Sri Lankan, and so on.

If you fill the "Other race" circle, be sure to print the name of the race.

If the person considers himself/herself to be "White," "Black or Negro," "Eskimo," or "Aleut", fill one circle only. Do not print the race in the box.

The "Black or Negro" category also includes persons who identify as African-American, Afro-American, Haitian, Jamaican, West Indian, Nigerian, and so on.

All persons, regardless of citizenship status, should answer this question.

2. Hispanic origin (question 7 was asked of all respondents).

#### Figure 2. Hispanic Question for the 1990 Census

<p>7. Is this person of Spanish/Hispanic origin? Fill ONE circle for each person.</p> <p>If Yes, other Spanish/Hispanic, print one group.→</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="radio"/> No (not Spanish/Hispanic)</li><li><input type="radio"/> Yes, Mexican, Mexican-Am., Chicano</li><li><input type="radio"/> Yes, Puerto Rican</li><li><input type="radio"/> Yes, Cuban</li><li><input type="radio"/> Yes, other Spanish/Hispanic (Print one group, for example: Argentinean, Colombian, Dominican, Nicaraguan, Salvadoran, Spaniard, and so on.)↓</li></ul> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%; margin-top: 10px;"></div>
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## *Impact of Ethnic Data Needs in the United States*

### **Instructions for Question 7**

A person is of Spanish/Hispanic origin if the person's origin (ancestry) is Mexican, Mexican-Am., Chicano, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Argentinian, Colombian, Costa Rican, Dominican, Ecuadoran, Guatemalan, Honduran, Nicaraguan, Peruvian, Salvadoran; from other Spanish-speaking countries of the Caribbean or Central or South America; or from Spain.

If you fill the Yes, other Spanish/Hispanic circle, print one group.

A person who is not of Spanish/Hispanic origin should answer this question by filling the No (not Spanish/Hispanic) circle. Note that the term "Mexican-Am." refers only to persons of Mexican origin or ancestry.

All persons, regardless of citizenship status, should answer this question.

3. Ancestry (question 13 was asked of a sample of the population).

### **Figure 3. Ancestry Question for the 1990 Census**

13. What is this person's ancestry or ethnic origin? ↓ (See instruction guide for further information.)
<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>
(For example: German, Italian, Afro-Amer., Croatian, Cape Verdean, Dominican, Ecuadoran, Haitian, Cajun, French Canadian, Jamaican, Korean, Lebanese, Mexican, Nigerian, Irish, Polish, Slovak, Taiwanese, Thai, Ukrainian, etc.)

### **Instructions for Question 13**

Print the ancestry group. Ancestry refers to the person's ethnic origin or descent, "Roots," or heritage. Ancestry also may refer to the country of birth of the person or the person's parents or ancestors before their arrival in the United States. All persons, regardless of citizenship status, should answer this question.

Persons who have more than one origin and cannot identify with a single group may report two ancestry groups (for example, German-Irish).

Be specific. For example, print whether West Indian, Asian Indian, or American Indian. West Indian includes persons whose ancestors came from Jamaica, Trinidad, Haiti, etc. Distinguish Cape Verdean from Portuguese; French Canadian from Canadian; and Dominican Republic from Dominica Island.

A religious group should not be reported as a person's ancestry.

4. Place of Birth (question 8 was asked of a sample of the population).

**Figure 4. Place of Birth Question for the 1990 Census**

<p>8. In what U.S. State or foreign country was this person born? ↓</p> <hr/> <p>(Name of State or foreign country; or Puerto Rico, Guam, etc.)</p>
---

### **Instructions for Question 8**

For persons born in the United States:

Print the name of the State in which this person was born. If the person was born in Washington, D.C., print District of Columbia. If the person was born in U.S. territory or commonwealth, print Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, or Northern Marianas.

For persons born outside the United States:

Print the name of the foreign country or area where the person was born. Use current boundaries, not boundaries at the time of the person's birth. Specify whether Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland (Eire); East or West Germany; North or South Korea; England, Scotland or Wales (not Great Britain or United Kingdom). Specify the particular country or island in the Caribbean (not, for example, West Indies).

5. Language (question 15 was asked of a sample of the population).

**Figure 5. Language and Ability to speak English Questions for the 1990 Census**

15a.	<b>Does this person speak a language other than English at home?</b> <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No - Skip to 16
b.	<b>What is this language? ↓</b> _____ (For example: Chinese, Italian, Spanish, Vietnamese)
c.	<b>How well does this person speak English?</b> <input type="radio"/> Very well <input type="radio"/> Not well <input type="radio"/> Well <input type="radio"/> Not at all

**Instructions for Question 15**

Mark Yes if the person sometimes or always speaks a language other than English at home.

Do not mark Yes for a language spoken only at school or if speaking is limited to a few expressions or slang.

Print the name of the language spoken at home. If this person speaks more than one non-English language and cannot determine which is spoken more often, report the first language the person learned to speak.

**Federal Legislation**

Civil rights legislation, judicial decisions and executive orders since 1960 were responsible for the renewed interest in and controversy surrounding the Census Bureau's collection of ethnic data. These were intended to prohibit discrimination based on race, gender or national origin in voter registration, employment, housing, education, lending, etc., but were also used to select the beneficiaries of federal programs (Lowry 1980, 10 and 1984, 48-49). Race and Hispanic origin (and to a limited extent ancestry) data are collected in support of federal legislation such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (PL 88-352), the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (PL 89-110), the Civil Rights Act of 1968 (PL 90-284), the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972 (PL 92-261) and the Older Americans Act of 1965 (see Lowry 1980, 10; McKenney and Cresce 1990, 7; and U.S. Department of Commerce 1991, 42-47 for additional federal legislative and program uses of data). By 1965, the collection of ethnic data became more critical because these data could affect the outcome of political elections, awards of federal contracts, admission to universities, availability of housing, employment practices inside and outside government and the disbursement of federal funds to state and local governments (Lowry 1980, 11).



Federal Policy Statistical Directive No. 15 issued by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is the principal federal directive specifying the requirements for the collection of race and ethnic group information by U.S. federal agencies.<sup>1</sup> This directive requires the collection of information on five race/ethnic groups: White, Black, American Indian and Alaska Native, and Asian or Pacific Islander, as well as persons of Hispanic origin. At a minimum, federal statistics must distinguish between White and Black persons who are not of Hispanic origin, American Indian and Alaska Natives, Asian or Pacific Islander and Hispanics. Federal agencies are allowed, in effect, to collect race/ethnic information with either one question or with two separate questions. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC), for example, uses one question with the five required race/ethnic categories for its notifiable disease reporting system.<sup>2</sup> The Social Security Administration also uses one question. The Census Bureau, on the other hand, uses separate questions (race and Hispanic origin) because this approach allows for greater flexibility and provides the most complete counts possible for all groups to meet legislative and other data users' needs.<sup>3</sup>

Ethnic statistics are used to monitor compliance with non-discrimination legislation and regulation and to set guidelines for affirmative action plans in government and private employment (U.S. Department of Commerce 1991, 42-47). One of the more important uses of census ethnic data is the distribution of political power. Historically, election districts have had questionable configurations as a result of efforts to ensure the electability of members of certain parties. The U.S. Department of Justice uses race/ethnic data to review the redistricting plans of each state's legislature to insure that "minority" groups are not disenfranchised during the process of creating voting districts.<sup>4</sup>

### **Federal, State, and Local Government Program Requirements**

Although program uses of ethnic data arise from legislation and executive decisions about how legislation is implemented, we believe there is an important difference between program and legislative uses. Legislative requirements specify what ethnic data are to be collected and how they will be used. On the other hand, program requirements use ethnic data to target specific ethnic groups as beneficiaries of programs arising from legislation and executive decisions. Many federal, state and local programs use ethnic data to evaluate whether or not groups received a "fair share" during the allocation and distribution of funds. Local governments use these data to target specific population segments, while private organizations use the data to obtain funds to work with targeted groups under these programs. Program uses include determination of qualifications for various programs such as the Food Stamp Program (Food and Agriculture Act of 1977), assistance to minority businesses in low-income areas, provision of social and nutritional services to the elderly and collection of vital social and health statistics.<sup>5</sup> State and local governments use these data in similar fashion but also use them to plan for schools, health and social service facilities and many other service needs. In sum, the distribution of funds and grants depends quite heavily on ethnic statistics collected by the federal

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government. The many pecuniary effects inherent in the use of ethnic statistics by public institutions, in turn, cause repercussions on the collection of these statistics, as we will discuss shortly.

### **Private Uses of Ethnic Data**

Private uses of ethnic data include business planning and marketing, and academic research (including social, economic and health research). The private sector uses ethnic data to target advertising, for market research, to determine where to locate merchandising and production facilities and so on. Mass media organizations use ethnic data to assess potential audience sizes and in setting advertising fees. Academic research – including research done at universities, private foundations and government agencies – often include ethnic data as controls in studies and to document the socio-economic and health conditions of different ethnic groups. This research, in turn, may inform legislators and policy makers and thereby influence legislation and executive decisions affecting ethnic groups. We will not discuss these in detail, but instead would like to discuss two areas of private interest in ethnic data which have been called "ethnic pride" and "ethnic politics."

### **Ethnic Pride**

Much of the private (non-governmental) demand for ethnic data comes from people and private organizations interested in statistics for particular ethnic groups. In many cases the interest is in counts, whether at the national level or for particular localities. Sometimes detailed cross-tabulations of other characteristics such as educational attainment, occupation, income, language and so on are also desired. In a few instances, there is interest in "pan-ethnic" groups such as "Arab" or "West Indian" which include many national origin groups. For example, after the 1980 Census, special tabulations were commissioned for Italian- and Arab-Americans by private organizations. The latter included tabulations of the Assyrian-Chaldean community of Detroit. Subsequently, a study was conducted to identify and describe the local Arab community, its size and geographic distribution, social and economic characteristics, special problems and needs and the resources available in the community to serve this population. This study was conducted in the hope that the information collected would lead to a better understanding of this group by the wider community and that it would assist community planners and human service agencies in their efforts to serve this diverse and growing population.

We have received many requests based on ethnic pride and the desire to have information to add new ethnic group designations or alter current ethnic coding schemes. Unfortunately, we find there is seldom unanimous agreement as to group identification or group membership. Prior to the 1990 Census, for example, we received requests to add "Creole," "Gagauz," "Mesknetian," "Occitan," "Taiwanese" and "Zoroastrian." Similarly, we had requests to combine "Alsatian," "Austrian," "Luxemburger," "Pennsylvania-German" and "Swiss," with the larger category



"German" in order to reflect "the true size" of all persons of "German ancestry" at the state and national level. Our intent here is not to criticize these efforts but rather to point out that this demand for ethnic data arises primarily from ethnic pride and the desire to have information about one's ethnic group.

### **Ethnic Politics**

"Ethnic politics," as referred to in this paper, is discussed in more depth in the conference papers by Estrada and Kobayashi, and to a lesser extent in the paper by McKenney and Cresce. Nevertheless, we feel it is important to discuss the political conflicts which arguably arise from the pecuniary interests inherent in the legislative and program uses of ethnic data. Lowry (1980, 10-12) argues that:

Whereas earlier status and judicial decisions had addressed problems of overt discrimination against specific individuals, the Congress and the courts went further in the 1960s, instructing federal authorities to look for patterns of discrimination, as evidenced by underrepresentation of "disadvantaged minorities" in the activity of interest; and, where such underrepresentation was found, requiring "affirmative action" by the relevant party to correct it, whether or not the underrepresentation resulted from deliberate discriminatory policies.

The "pattern of discrimination" and "affirmative action" concepts together form a watershed in civil rights legislation. Their underlying principle is that each minority is entitled to a fair share of all "openings," whether ballots, jobs in a factory, seats in a classroom, apartments in a housing development, or food stamps. And each group's fair share is, basically, its share of the population at large or some relevant subset of that population.

Ethnic activists were quick to understand the practical significance of the fair share principle: The larger the official count of their group's numbers, the greater would be the group's legal advantage in the competition for jobs, promotions, placement in training programs, housing, education, and access to federal benefits.

According to Choldin (1986, 406) the "... events of the sixties — the Black civil rights movement, the passage of new federal social legislation, the promulgation of new agencies for disadvantaged minority groups ..." created an awareness of the need for better statistics on ethnic groups. Federal programs resulting from the new social legislation designed to aid minority groups required statistical evidence of each group's disadvantage. Ethnic groups not currently benefiting from these programs need data, first, to demonstrate the need for special legislative and program attention, and second, to rank themselves relative to other groups already receiving benefits.



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Choldin (1986) describes the process leading to the inclusion of the Hispanic origin question on the 100 percent questionnaire of the 1980 Census. He notes that leaders of Hispanic ethnic groups began to demand improved official statistics in the late 1960s to document the social condition of Hispanics "in order to take advantage of opportunities created by that decade's social legislation" (Choldin 1986, 413). Although ethnic pride may also play a part in ethnic politics, the primary impetus is to document the size and socio-economic status of a particular groups vis à vis other groups.

Lowry (1989, 27-32) describes how leaders of Asian and Pacific Islander (API) groups were able to reverse the decision to drop some of the prelisted API categories on the race question in favor of a general write-in box for the API category during the development of the 1990 Census questionnaire. They expressed strong concerns that a write-in box might not produce high quality statistics for the large number of very diverse groups under this rubric, particularly among groups with many recent migrants. This, they thought, might lead to misclassifications and a lower total count for the API community. Prelisted categories also had the advantage of being machine readable and therefore more likely to be tabulated sooner than other entries. And finally, explicitly naming ethnic groups is a "social validation" of their existence and importance to the nation (Lowry 1989, 29). Under pressure from the API community and with bilateral support in Congress, the Census Bureau re-examined alternative race questions. In spite of test results indicating the Census Bureau's original proposal would produce reliable data and the promise of 100 percent coding of API write-in entries, the prelisted groups were re-instated.<sup>6</sup>

Although it is tempting to cite these as examples of reign of politics over science (see, for example, Petersen 1983), it may be appropriate to view these as win-win situations (Choldin 1986, 413). In return for modifying the questionnaire in 1990, for example, the Census Bureau probably received more cooperation from the API community which, in turn, may have produced a better census. Some of the concerns expressed above turned out to be unfounded for the 1990 Census, however, because the Census Bureau coded the write-in entries. Coding the race write-in responses on the 100 percent questionnaire not only allowed the Census Bureau to publish data for a large number of race groups but also had the effect of producing more reliable race data than would have been possible without coding.

According to Lowry (1989), the perception of the large stakes involved in the collection of ethnic data produces concern about coverage and classification of ethnic groups. Census coverage research has shown certain ethnic groups are more likely to be undercounted than others. Survey research experience also suggests that wording, formatting and sequencing of ethnic questions can affect responses and thereby official counts of ethnic groups. Members of ethnic groups can be misclassified because "... there are no clear standards for membership in an ethnic group." Systematic misclassification can dramatically alter the final counts of ethnic groups (Lowry 1989, 3). Therefore, it is not surprising that these issues can pit advocates of one ethnic group against another (Lowry 1980, 12).

In sum, the high stakes inherent in the use of ethnic statistics have created pressure for changes in question selection and wording, data collection procedures and publication of ethnic data. But this circumstance may be quite appropriate. As Choldin (1986, 404) reminds us, "national statistics must change in response to socio-political changes, that the role of the statistician is not simply scientific, but is also conditioned by events in the political environment."

### **Meeting diverse ethnic data needs**

The U.S. Census Bureau used a multi-faceted approach to determine the needs for ethnic data. Recommendations for question content for the 1990 Census came from a variety of sources including local public meetings (LPMs), census advisory committees (CACs), interagency working groups (IWGs), the Federal Agency Council (FAC) and special conferences. Census Bureau's subject matter specialists also received input on the needs for ethnic data through contacts with researchers, academics, members of ethnic communities and the general public, as well as by reviewing the relevant literature.

#### **Local Public Meetings**

In preparation for the 1990 Census, the Census Bureau conducted 65 open public hearings, called Local Public Meetings, over a two-year period beginning in April 1984. Although well attended by the general public, state and local government representatives comprised over 54 percent of the attendees. In terms of race/ethnic data, representatives from areas where there is little or no ethnic diversity suggested that too much information on ethnicity was being collected. Just the opposite was the case where ethnic diversity was the greatest. Representatives from areas with more heterogeneous populations wanted to retain or increase the detail of ethnic data. Data users, primarily from large urban centers, voiced strong opposition to a combined race/Hispanic origin question, indicating that this would not meet their data requirements. Opinions were divided about the usefulness of the ancestry question and whether parental birth place should replace it (U.S. Department of Commerce 1991, 4).

#### **Census Advisory Committees**

The Department of Commerce established four 1990 Census Advisory Committees (CACs) in 1986 dealing with the American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian and Pacific Islander, Black and Hispanic populations. The CACs provided feedback from their respective communities to the Census Bureau on content, data needs, enumeration, outreach, publicity and other census plans and operations. In regularly scheduled meetings, the CACs raised questions and provided comments on various test versions of the ethnic questions (U.S. Department of Commerce 1991, 6).



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### **Interagency Working Groups**

In 1984, the Census Bureau formed 10 Interagency Working Groups (IWGs) to learn about data needs of other federal agencies. Each IWG was chaired by a Census Bureau staff member who prepared a report detailing content recommendations, geographic levels of data requirements, legislative and program uses and any suggestions for improving operational and publication programs. Two IWGs reviewed ethnic items: the IWG on American Indians and Alaska Natives and the IWG on Race and Ethnicity. The IWG on American Indians and Alaska Natives recommended collection and tabulation of data on "American Indian," "Eskimo," and "Aleut" as separate categories and supported retaining the category "Hawaiian" (U.S. Department of Commerce 1991, 4-5).

The IWG on Race and Ethnicity recommended separate questions for race and Hispanic origin because a combined question would not meet federal data needs and could result in an undercount of some racial groups and the Hispanic population. Preserving the historical continuity of the race question was also an important consideration for this IWG. They felt the "Other race" category should be retained but suggested that responses to this category be minimized. They recommended multiple race entries (e.g., Black-White or Japanese-White) be edited into specific race categories, while indeterminate groups (e.g., "Eurasian" or "Wesort") be placed in a "multiracial" category under "Other race." They also recommended a sequencing test placing Hispanic origin before and after race but were concerned about the adverse effect this might have on the race question. They also preferred separate questions on ancestry and place of birth of parents. They favored combining ancestry and Hispanic origin if questionnaire space limited choices. When asked to choose between ancestry and place of birth of parents, the latter won by slight margin (U.S. Department of Commerce 1991, 5-6).

### **Federal Agency Council**

In 1984 the Office of Management and the Budget (OMB) established the Federal Agency Council (FAC) to advise OMB about federal needs for 1990 Census data and to provide a forum for information exchange between federal agencies and the Census Bureau. This also helped agencies become aware of each other's data needs. The FAC used the content recommendations of IWGs as a major information source for deliberations. The FAC agreed with most of 200 recommendations made by the IWGs (U.S. Department of Commerce 1991, 6).

### **Special Conferences**

There were two major conferences sponsored by the Census Bureau in the 1980s. The 1985 Race and Ethnic Items Conference (U.S. Department of Commerce 1991, 5; Lichtman-Panzer 1989, 4-5) sought advice and recommendations on the race, Spanish/Hispanic origin, ancestry and parental place of birth questions for the 1986 National Content Test (NCT) from about 30



representatives of various academic, research and ethnic communities. The participants recommended testing several versions of the race and Hispanic origin questions which included modifications of format, wording, instructions and sequencing. They recommended a test of the inclusion of the term "race" that had been dropped in the 1980 race question and the 1980 Hispanic origin question be modified to include a write-in area for the "Other Spanish/Hispanic" category. Participants also recommended testing the sequencing of the Hispanic origin question, placing it immediately after the race question and testing the sequencing of the race, Hispanic origin and ancestry questions in consecutive order. While the participants could not provide a recommendation to choose between ancestry or parental birthplace, they were unanimous in deciding not to test a combined Hispanic origin and ancestry question.<sup>7</sup>

The 1987 Special Meeting on Race and Spanish/Hispanic Origin Items (U.S. Department of Commerce 1990, 5) was held to assess the results of the 1986 test censuses and the NCT and to solicit suggestions for refinements for testing in 1987. Participants included members of the four 1990 Census Advisory Committees, academicians, researchers and leaders of ethnic communities. They recommended continued testing of the "short" versions of the race and Hispanic origin questions as well as wording and format changes to both. The short version of race included fewer prelisted categories, while the Hispanic origin version had none.<sup>8</sup>

### **Subject Matter Specialists**

The Census Bureau has a fairly large staff of "subject matter specialists" who are in daily contact with not only the general public but also a variety of researchers, academics, members of ethnic communities and government officials from around the country and in some cases, from other countries. In addition to providing data and information, subject matter specialists keep up on the relevant subject matter literature, write reports and attend and present papers at professional conferences. In the process of these contacts, these specialists become aware of the many, and often contradictory, needs for ethnic data.

### **Conceptual Difficulties**

If "experts" in ethnicity have difficulty conceptualizing and operationalizing "ethnicity", it is only natural that respondents also are confused by questions eliciting ethnic information (Lieberson and Waters 1988; McKenney, Cresce, and Johnson 1988). The Census Bureau, for example, uses questions on race, Hispanic origin and ancestry, and to some extent place of birth, as different measures of ethnicity. Although the Census Bureau and many outside researchers conceptualize and operationalize these items as quite distinct measures of ethnicity, many respondents may not be so clear about the distinction. Our census experience indicates that many people answer only one or two of these and leave the remainder blank, assuming perhaps that the other questions do not apply or that the answer has been supplied in another item.

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The selection of categories and provision of examples are designed to assist, but may also confuse, the respondent. For example, the race question which presumably seeks to elicit what Isajiw (1974, 118) calls the "biological genetic" part of a "common ancestral origin", includes categories for several national origin groups (e.g., Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, etc.). Respondents who wish to report other national origins as their "race" can become confused about what they are being asked (see for example, Lieberman and Waters 1988, 15; Tienda and Ortiz 1986, 5). It is precisely this issue that led the Census Bureau to test "short" versions of the race and Hispanic origin questions for 1990 (see McKenney and Cresce 1990; and McKenney, Cresce, and Johnson 1988).

There are three circles on the Hispanic origin question which we might term "national origin groups" (e.g., Mexican, Puerto Rican and Cuban). Tests conducted by the Census Bureau in preparation for the 1990 Census suggested that these national origin groups were required in order to better identify Hispanic origin groups (U.S. Department of Commerce 1991, 28-31). Researchers have reported that the primary identifier of persons of Hispanic origin is their national origin and that they may not identify well with more global terms like "Hispanic" or "Spanish" (see for example, Bean and Tienda 1987). Preliminary results from the 1990 Census, however, indicate that people wishing to report a non-Hispanic national origin also availed themselves of the opportunity to use the write-in area in this item for that purpose.

Many of the examples appearing on the questionnaire for ancestry were primarily national origin groups (e.g., German, Italian, Cape Verdean and so on), although there were more general ethnic ancestries (Afro-American, Croatian and Cajun). Additional examples were provided in the user instructions. Preliminary results from the 1990 Census indicate the great majority of responses we received on ancestry were national origins. Thus, it seems fair to conclude that national origin is an important link between the Census Bureau's ethnic questions, both as designed and as interpreted by many respondents.

The validity of "race" as concept continues to be controversial (see Forbes 1989, 1-2 and 1990, 6; Hahn 1992, 268; Osborne and Feit 1992, 275; Weissmann 1990, 102). As Hahn (1992, 268) notes "... biological notions of 'race' may be confused with cultural and behavioral notions of 'ethnicity.'" Many researchers including Forbes (1991); Isajiw (1974); Lieberman and Waters (1988, 22); and Osborne and Feit (1992, 275); and Siegel and Passel (1979) note that the concepts of race and ethnicity are situational, changing in definition through time and place. In the same manner, Forbes (1989, 6) and Gimenez (1989, 558) question the validity of "Hispanic" as an ethnic group mixing racial and cultural groups together. The extent of intermarriage between groups of different racial and ethnic origins in the United States makes it "... difficult to accept race as a precise and mutually exclusive category ..." (Osborne and Feit 1992, 275). Much the same can be said of many other groups (see Forbes 1990 and 1991).



Siegel and Passel (1979) suggest that confusion arises from "fuzzy group boundaries" and ambiguous criteria for group membership. Forbes (1990, 22-23), for example, argues that the Census Bureau undercounts American Indians by manipulating racial identity in such a way as to incorrectly assign them to other race/ethnic categories and by giving preference to other race groups in cases of mixed ancestral origins. In a similar vein, Forbes (1989) believes it more reasonable to place most persons whose origins are Latin American countries with high concentrations of indigenous peoples in the Native American category than to place them in a separate group with White Europeans under the rubric of "Hispanic". Given the many problems with assigning group boundaries, we may have to "... move away from the traditional view of ethnic and racial groups as an invariant set of categories, with membership fixed in one simple and correct way over a person's lifetime or even intergenerationally" (Lieberson and Waters 1988, 25).

### Operational Concerns

Operational decisions may affect the measurement of ethnicity. For example, prelisted categories in an ethnic question may yield different results from an open-ended question or even a mixture of the two (see Lieberson and Waters 1988, 17-19). The order, number and type of prelisted categories or the examples used in the instructions of an open-ended question may yield different selections by respondents. The type of questionnaire (interviewer versus self-administered, telephone versus personal interviews or self versus proxy reporting) may yield very different results (see Hahn 1992; Lieberson and Waters 1988, 22-25; Osborne and Feit 1992). Telephone versus personal interviews may affect ethnic reporting, as may geographic differences in ethnic identity. We need to be aware that the choices of instruments and the format and order of ethnic items can greatly affect ethnic measurement.

### Multiple Indicators of Ethnicity

Another major issue arises from the use of multiple overlapping indicators or measures of ethnicity. For example, there is a high degree of correlation between the responses on different measures of ethnicity for Asian and Hispanic groups, but much less overlap exists for Blacks and American Indians. Farley (1991, 418), for example, suggests that ancestry provides relatively little new information about Asian groups identified in race and Hispanic groups in Hispanic origin. Lieberson and Waters (1988) note wide discrepancies between the number of Black and American Indian responses on race versus ancestry. Other groups, such as European, Arab, West Indian groups, for example, appear in one large group (White or Black) in race and are only differentiated through ancestry.

One effect of multiple indicators of ethnicity is that respondents may fail to answer one or two items after identifying their group in one item. For example, on the race item a Hispanic person may have checked the "Other Race" block and entered a national origin group like



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"Mexican" or a country like "Guatemala" in the write-in area and then may not have provided any response on Hispanic origin or ancestry. Another may have left race and ancestry blank but checked one of the Hispanic origin categories. During field tests prior to the 1990 Census, we observed many Hispanics giving identical answers to all three items indicating they saw no difference in these questions. We experienced a high degree of non-response on Hispanic origin and ancestry (approximately 10 percent) during the last two censuses, either because the questions were not understood by respondents or because respondents thought they had already provided their ethnicity in another question. Nearly half of Hispanic origin respondents were not able to select a specific racial category other than "Other Race" in 1990.

### Ethnic Group Equity

Members of ethnic groups not explicitly appearing on the questionnaire often feel left out, particularly when groups which are numerically smaller do appear. This perceived inequity of treatment may create ill feeling towards the census and may reduce respondent cooperation. In addition, we found that many respondents in 1990, whose group did not specifically appear in race and Hispanic origin questions, availed themselves of the opportunity to use write-in areas intended for other groups to indicate their ethnicity. Although, through editing, some of these responses were corrected, they nevertheless caused additional outlays of time and effort and money to correct.

### A Solution?

In the past many response problems in the race/ethnic questions were resolved with "follow-up" procedures in which respondents with several problems or omissions on their questionnaires were re-interviewed. This is, of course, labor- and time-intensive and therefore expensive, making it an unlikely option in these fiscally constrained times. Several researchers have noted similarities among our race/ethnic items (Farley 1990b, 3; Lieberman and Waters 1988, 15). A joint Hispanic origin and ancestry question was suggested by the Interagency Working Group on Race and Ethnicity but the idea was rejected at the 1985 Race and Ethnic Items conference (U.S. Department of Commerce 1991, 4-6). Farley (1990a, 145) recommended that the Census Bureau experiment with a combination of some or all of these items. The Census Bureau is not recommending a combined "race/ethnic" question but the idea may merit consideration for future testing. One possibility is to have a question which combines race, Hispanic origin and ancestry. A key feature of this item would be a set of prelisted categories to meet the requirements of federal programs much like our present categories. This feature corresponds roughly to Hirschman's "primary ethnic identity" and Isajiw's "ethnic group" as expressed in their respective conference papers. In Hirschman's words, this dimension of ethnicity "is logically measured only in terms of mutually exclusive assignment among a predetermined list of major ethnic groups". A second feature would be the provision of a write-in area to allow greater elucidation of ethnic membership. A large variety of examples can be provided to

indicate to the respondent the type of answer being elicited. This feature corresponds roughly Hirschman's "ancestry" and Isajiw's "ethnic identity" in their respective conference papers. The primary objective is measure as fully as possible the complexity of ethnic origins and obtain in Hirschman's words "a minimal estimate of the diversity of the ethnic origins of the population". Figure 6 shows how such a question might be constructed.

Coded write-in entries could be used to assign a federal category in a predetermined manner in the event that the respondent does not check a prelisted category. By coding multiple entries we could accommodate multiple and mixed ancestries and allow members of ethnic groups not currently appearing in our 1990 race and Hispanic origin items to identify their ethnic origin more explicitly and with greater fairness. Information garnered from coding the write-in entries would be published separately from the prelisted groups, allowing the latter to be used for legislative and program uses and the former for other uses. In combining the three items it might be possible to restore the parental birth place question. The answers to this question, combined with place of birth and language could assist us in interpreting ambiguous write-in entries or assisting us in selecting a federal category.

We reiterate that the Census Bureau is not recommending such a race/ethnic question but we do recommend that further research is needed. We recognize there would be many problems in designing and/or implementing such a question. There may be significant opposition from the many supporters of the current set of items. The Census Bureau would have to conclusively demonstrate that such a question would not increase misidentification or misclassification of any ethnic groups and that any increases in quality would offset problems associated with the loss of comparability.

**Figure 6. Example of a Combined Race-Ethnic Question**

<p><b>Race or Ethnic Origin</b></p> <p>Fill ONE circle for the race or ethnic group with which you most closely identify yourself. You may also print a more specific entry in the write-in area provided. Be specific whenever possible.</p>	<p><input type="radio"/> African-Amer., Black or Negro (Print the name of a more specific group below)</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Aleut</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Indian (Amer.) (Print the name of the enrolled or principal tribe)</p> <hr/> <p><input type="radio"/> Asian (Print the name of a more specific group below)</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Eskimo</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Hispanic or Latino (Print the name of a more specific group below)</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Pacific Islander (Print the name of a more specific group below)</p> <p><input type="radio"/> White (Print the name of a more specific group below)</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Mixed (Print the names of more specific groups below)</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Other race or ethnic group (Print the name of a more specific group below)</p> <hr/>
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### **Target Population Groups**

Currently the Census Bureau attempts to address target population groups in the decennial censuses and in special surveys. In spite of the great diversity of the U.S. population, the decennial census is the preferred method used to collect data of all target population groups even when that group is not uniformly present in the sampled universe. The inclusion of a question or a new category of an existing item is used to identify the group(s) of interest. For example, American Indians, Eskimo and Aleuts, the elderly, the disabled, the homeless and the institutional population are some of the groups for which there are many legislative and program requirements for data (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census 1991, 42-44). By including the target groups on the census questionnaire, statistics for those groups will be produced in the normal processing of census returns at very little additional cost and thereby obtain the official Census Bureau cachet.



Although the census may be a good vehicle for collecting counts of small groups, it may not be the best source of data on characteristics for these groups. The advantage of using one questionnaire throughout the country is uniformity of data and comparability but the main disadvantage is that the information collected often does not totally meet the data requirements of the ethnic group. For example, the United States government has a legally established government-to-government relationship with American Indian tribes and Alaska Native villages. Because of this unique federal trust relationship, there are specialized legislative data requirements for these groups and unique geography requirements for the American Indian and Alaska Native areas (reservations, off-reservation trust land, tribal jurisdiction statistical areas in Oklahoma and Alaska Native villages and regional corporations). Congress, federal agencies and American Indian and Alaska Native government need data for formulating legislation, making policy decisions, program planning and allocating program funds.

One solution is to have special questionnaires to meet these data requirements as a supplement to the regular census. Thus, such a questionnaire could contain questions on socio-economic and housing characteristics that are relevant to a particular target group. Another solution is to conduct special national probability surveys but often these do not provide sufficient data for smaller ethnic groups or in sufficient geographic detail. In the 1980 Census, the Census Bureau included a special questionnaire to gather data on the American Indian, Eskimo or Aleut populations in American Indian reservations, Alaska Native villages and selected areas of Oklahoma. The questionnaire produced data on characteristics such as tribal enrollment, tribal and Bureau of Indian Affairs schools, health care, housing, labor force participation and other items concerning the living conditions of this population. Information required for governmental programs about target population groups might be better served with different survey instruments and methodologies rather than the standard census.

### **Comparability**

Figure 7 adapted from McKenney and Cresce (1990) shows the history of the census questions related to ethnicity dating back to 1850. In general, the Census Bureau has tried to maintain comparability whenever possible. One of the important uses of census ethnic data is to document intercensal changes in the socio-economic status of ethnic groups. Because changes in questionnaires or procedures can alter results, the Census Bureau does not change any item without a good deal of prior testing. One result of this is that census questionnaires may not be able to keep up with changes in ethnic identification. The growth of immigration from all over the world combined with increased intermarriage among diverse ethnic groups will only exacerbate this problem. As a result, the policy issue that needs to be addressed is whether it is more important to have a "better" measure of ethnicity as it currently exists or whether comparability is desired at the cost of less "accurate" ethnic measurement. As we have noted above, socio-political circumstances may, in any case, dictate changes which affect comparability.

**Figure 7. Population Items Related to Ethnicity on General Schedules of Decennial Censuses: 1850 to 1990**

Demographic Characteristic	1850	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990
Race	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Hispanic origin	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Xs	X	X
Ancestry	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Xs	Xs
Place of birth	X <sup>1</sup>	X <sup>1</sup>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Xs	Xs	Xs <sup>2</sup>	Xs	Xs	Xs
Place of birth of parents	-	-	X <sup>3</sup>	X	X	X	X	X	X	Xs	Xs	Xs	Xs	-	-
Language: Non-English language <sup>4</sup>	-	-	-	-	X	-	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	Xs	Xs
Mother tongue <sup>5</sup>	-	-	-	-	-	-	X	X	X	Xs	-	Xs	Xs	-	-

X Item included on all questionnaires.

Xs Item included on sample questionnaires.

- Item not included.

<sup>1</sup> Question asked of free inhabitants only.

<sup>2</sup> In 1960, place of birth of was asked generally on a sample basis, but on a 100-percent basis in New York and Puerto Rico.

<sup>3</sup> Question was only whether parents were foreign-born.

<sup>4</sup> In 1890 and 1910, the question was simply whether persons could speak English. In 1910, 1980, and 1990 the question obtained information on ability to speak English and non-English language spoken.

<sup>5</sup> In 1910 and 1920, obtained mother tongue of respondent and his/her foreign-born parents.

Source: Adapted from Passel and Levin (1987); U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1973. Population and Housing Inquiries in U.S. Decennial Censuses: 1790-1970, Working Paper No. 39, Washington, D.C.: Table 1, pp. 5-9.

## **Summary and Conclusions**

The basic need for ethnic information in the United States comes from legislative and government program requirements but has other private uses as well. Civil rights legislation, judicial decisions and executive orders since 1960 have renewed the interest in, and controversy surrounding, the Census Bureau's collection of ethnic data. The former were intended to prohibit discrimination based on race, gender or national origin in voter registration, employment, housing, education, lending, etc., but were also used to select the beneficiaries of federal programs. "Ethnic politics", arguably arising from the pecuniary aspects inherent in the use of ethnic data for legislative and program purposes, combined with "ethnic pride" has taken the collection of ethnic data out of the purely scientific domain.

The U.S. Census Bureau used a multi-faceted approach to determine the needs for ethnic data for the 1990 Census. Recommendations for question content came from a variety of solicited sources including public meetings, advisory committees, working groups, meetings with representatives from federal, state and local governments and special ethnic conferences. Staff at the Census Bureau also received input on the needs for ethnic data through contacts with researchers, academics, members of ethnic communities and the general public and by reviewing the relevant literature. Unfortunately, there was no unanimity about how or what "ethnic" information should be collected.

The Census Bureau uses three items, "race", "Hispanic origin" and "ancestry" as the primary ethnic identifiers. Critics of these items point to many conceptual and operational difficulties. "Fuzzy" group boundaries, lack of clear membership rules, overlapping or multiple indicators of ethnic group membership and unequal treatment of ethnic groups are among the problems with the current items. Farley (1990a) suggests the Census Bureau consider some version of a combined race/ethnicity question. Although this solution is bound to be controversial and is not without its own problems, the idea merits further research.

Another difficulty noted is the insistence of using the census as primary source of information for target populations because of the official cachet of statistics collected by this method. Although the census may be a good vehicle for collecting counts of target groups, it may not be the best source for data on the characteristics of these groups. Supplemental questionnaires and special collection methods as adjuncts to the census may be a solution. And finally, comparability of ethnic items is highly desired but has not been possible to maintain because of immigration from ever more diverse countries and intermarriage among groups.

Increasing diversity and the changing sociopolitical climate make it difficult to maintain comparability. As Choldin (1986) reminds us, our national statistics probably should, and will, change in response to the socio-political environment. Our role as statisticians cannot be simply scientific but is conditioned by social and political events in our nations. Given the many



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difficulties in measuring ethnicity, Lieberman and Waters (1988, 25) advise us to "... move away from the traditional view of ethnic and racial groups as an invariant set of categories, with membership fixed in one simple and correct way over a person's lifetime ....". In the end, we must decide whether it is more important to measure "ethnicity" as it currently exists or maintain comparability at the cost of less "accurate" ethnic measurement.

### Notes

1. Office of Management and Budget, Statistical Directive No. 15: "Race and Ethnic Standards for Federal Agencies and Administrative Reporting," *Federal Register* 43:19269-19270, May 4, 1978. See Appendix A for relevant text.
2. According to Buehler et al., 1989, these groups are "White non-Hispanic, Black non-Hispanic, Hispanic, Native American (includes American Indians, Eskimos and Aleuts), Asian and Pacific Islander, and unspecified."
3. See Forbes 1989:11-15 and Hahn 1992:269 for critiques of OMB Statistical Directive 15.
4. Title 13, United States Code Section 141; see U.S. Department of Commerce 1991:42,45.
5. The interested reader is directed to U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census (1991:42-47) for a more detailed summary of federal uses of ethnic data.
6. See the paper by McKenney and Cresce for this conference; McKenney and Cresce, 1990; McKenney, Cresce, and Johnson, 1988; and U.S. Department of Commerce, 1991:12-16, for a more detailed review of the development of the race question for the 1990 Census.
7. For more details about this conference, see the Census Bureau report *1990 Planning Conference Series, Race and Ethnic Items*, No.12, which may be obtained from the Special Population Statistics Area, Population Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, DC 20233.
8. For more details about this meeting, see the Census Bureau report *The Content Development Process for the 1990 Census of Population and Housing*, September 1987. A copy may be obtained from the Data Requirements Branch, Decennial Planning Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, DC 20233.

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**Appendix A - Continued**

**Directive No. 15**

**Race and Ethnic Standards for Federal Statistics and Administrative Reporting**

This Directive provides standard classifications for recordkeeping, collection, and presentation of data on race and ethnicity in Federal program administrative reporting and statistical activities. These classifications should not be interpreted as being scientific or anthropological in nature, nor should they be viewed as determinants of eligibility for participation in any Federal program. They have been developed in response to needs expressed by both the executive branch and the Congress to provide for the collection and use of compatible, nonduplicated, exchangeable racial and ethnic data by Federal agencies.

**1. Definitions**

The basic racial and ethnic categories for Federal statistics and program administrative reporting are defined as follows:

- a. *American Indian or Alaskan Native.* A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North America, and who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition.
- b. *Asian or Pacific Islander.* A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, or the Pacific Islands. This area includes for example, China, India, Japan, Korea, the Philippine Islands and Samoa.
- c. *Black.* A person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa.
- d. *Hispanic.* A person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.
- e. *White.* A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, North Africa, or the Middle East.

**2. Utilization for Recordkeeping and Reporting**

To provide flexibility, it is preferable to collect data on race and ethnicity separately. If separate race and ethnic categories are used, the minimum designations are:

**Appendix A - Continued**

**a. *Race:***

- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian or Pacific Islander
- Black
- White

**b. *Ethnicity:***

- Hispanic origin
- Not of Hispanic origin

When race and ethnicity are collected separately, the number of White and Black persons who are Hispanic must be identifiable, and capable of being reported in that category.

If a combined format is used to collect racial and ethnic data, the minimum acceptable categories are:

American Indian or Alaskan Native

Asian or Pacific Islander

Black, not of Hispanic origin

Hispanic

White, not of Hispanic origin

The category which most closely reflects the individual's recognition in his community should be used for purposes of reporting on persons who are of mixed racial and/or ethnic origins.

In no case should the provisions of this Directive be construed to limit the collection of data to the categories described above. However, any reporting required which uses more detail shall be organized in such a way that the additional categories can be aggregated into these basic racial/ethnic categories.

The minimum standard collection categories shall be utilized for reporting as follows:

- a. *Civil rights compliance reporting.*** The categories specified above will be used by all agencies in either the separate or combined format for civil rights compliance reporting and equal employment reporting for both the public and private sectors and for all levels of government. Any variation requiring less detailed data or data which cannot be aggregated into the basis categories will have to be specifically approved by the Office of Federal Statistical Policy and Standards for executive agencies. More



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### **Appendix A - Continued**

detailed reporting which can be aggregated to the basic categories may be used at the agencies' discretion.

- b. *General program administrative and grant reporting.* Whenever an agency subject to this Directive issues new or revised administrative reporting or recordkeeping requirements which include racial/ethnic data, the agency will use the race/ethnic categories described above. A variance can be specifically requested from the Office of Federal Statistical Policy and Standards, but such a variance will be granted only if the agency can demonstrate that it is not reasonable for the primary reporter to determine the racial or ethnic background in terms of the specified categories, and that such determination is not critical to the administration of the program in question, or if the specific program is directed to only one or a limited number of race/ethnic groups, e.g., Indian tribal activities.
- c. *Statistical reporting.* The categories described in this Directive will be used as a minimum for federally sponsored statistical data collection where race and/or ethnicity is required, except when: the collection involves a sample of such size that the data on the smaller categories would be unreliable, or when the collection effort focuses on a specific racial or ethnic group. A repetitive survey shall be deemed to have an adequate sample size if the racial and ethnic data can be reliably aggregated on a biennial basis. Any other variation will have to be specifically authorized by OMB through the reports clearance process (see OMB Circular No. A-40). In those cases where the data collection is not subject to the reports clearance process, a direct request for a variance should be made to the OFSPS.

### **3. Effective Date**

The provisions of this Directive are effective immediately for all *new* and *revised* recordkeeping or reporting requirements containing racial and/or ethnic information. All *existing* recordkeeping or reporting requirements shall be made consistent with this Directive at the time they are submitted for extension, or not later than January 1, 1980.

### **4. Presentation of Race/Ethnic Data**

Displays of racial and ethnic compliance and statistical data will use the category designations listed above. The designation "non-white" is not acceptable for use in the presentation of Federal Government data. It is not to be used in any publication of compliance or statistical data or in the text of any compliance or statistical report.

## **Appendix A - Concluded**

In cases where the above designations are considered inappropriate for presentation of statistical data on particular programs or for particular regional areas, the sponsoring agency may use:

- a. The designations "Black and Other Races" or "All Other Races", as collective descriptions of minority races when the most summary distinction between the majority and minority races is appropriate;
- b. The designations "White," "Black," and "All Other Races" when the distinction among the majority race, the principal minority race and other races is appropriate; or
- c. The designation of a particular minority race or races, and the inclusion of "Whites" with "All Other Races", if such a collective description is appropriate.

In displaying detailed information which represents a combination of race and ethnicity, the description of the data being displayed must clearly indicate that both bases of classification are being used.

When the primary focus of a statistical report is on two or more specific identifiable groups in the population, one or more of which is racial or ethnic, it is acceptable to display data for each of the particular groups separately and to describe data relating to the remainder of the population by an appropriate collective description.





# *Quebec Cultural Communities: a Multifaceted Field Requiring Customized Tools*

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## **Summary**

The reality of cultural communities in Quebec, the desire to ensure their full participation in the life of the province as a whole and a further desire to foster harmonious intercommunity relations have created the need for knowledge of these communities and of the criteria used to identify certain target clienteles in the area of policy and program implementation. These needs, already very present during the 1980's, can only become more urgent in the years to come given the direction and measures the Quebec government has taken with regards to immigration and integration in a policy statement and government action plan.

The concept of cultural communities is a multifaceted one bearing quantitative and qualitative components which the Ministère des Communautés culturelles et de l'Immigration must take into account. In the development of its databank, all the ethnocultural variables from the census have been maintained. Consequently, we are equipped with the tools which allow us to supply the stakeholders and partners with the data they require to target and characterize specific populations. This approach provides the necessary flexibility, since an adequate tool can change to suit a particular need, situation and time period. A fundamental need leads us to strongly recommend voluntary identification of visible minorities in relation to the *Employment Equity Act*. We also believe that we must support attempts to operationalize the concept of cultural communities while maintaining several standardization profiles in order to respect the flexibility required by users for specific purposes.

Insofar as it is important, in order to monitor the impact of various programs, to have access to time series from which medium- and long-term projections may be drawn, data collection in the future will reflect that of the past, i.e. it will be based both on necessary tradition and on the need to create tools adapted to new circumstances and current needs. Our paper highlights today's need for a question on ethnic origin which considers the current allegiance of individuals.

## **Cultural Communities in Quebec: Increased Social Awareness in the Eighties**

It was some years before Quebec came to define itself as a society that would welcome immigrants and help them achieve integration. Not until the sixties did francophone Quebecers realize that they could and should consider immigration as a factor in a society's development and participate in this shared-authority sector. Quebec's Immigration ministry was created in

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1968 with two priorities: greater participation by Quebec in the recruitment and selection of its immigrants in order to better meet the economic and cultural needs of Quebec society; and reception and integration measures designed to assist the assimilation of new arrivals into the francophone community.

Although the Quebec government has now been involved in immigration matters for nearly 25 years, francophone institutions in the province did not become aware of its pluralist make-up until more recently. Naturally, ever since the Ministry was created, it has been a reference point to which members of cultural communities may address themselves, and to which government institutions may likewise apply for technical and professional support in their work among these communities. However, beginning in the 1980s, the presence of cultural communities has increasingly been acknowledged by public, parapublic, municipal and private institutions, which have shown a manifest desire to obtain more information about immigration and about the members of cultural communities in the province. Not only have we become aware of these groups' presence, but also we want to promote the development of harmonious relations and make sure that their members become full participants in Quebec's society.

It was with these objectives in mind that in 1981 the Quebec government broadened the Immigration ministry's mandate. The ministry is now the Ministère des Communautés culturelles et de l'Immigration (MCCI) and is responsible for the planning, coordination and implementation of government policies concerning the cultural communities' development and their full participation in the life of the province. In particular, the Minister is responsible for programs aimed at maintaining and developing cultures of origin and fostering exchanges and contacts with the francophone community (section 4 of the Ministry's constituent act).

By thus broadening the Ministry's goals, the government underscored the role that the Ministry has since continued to exercise and strengthen, as a result of which it has acquired increasingly detailed knowledge of the various cultural communities.

The government also created, in 1984, the Conseil des communautés culturelles et de l'immigration (Cultural Communities and Immigration Council). The council may, among other things, advise the Minister, inform him of any question relating to cultural communities and immigration, solicit opinions, and receive and hear related requests and suggestions. As well, in December 1986 the Assemblée nationale [the provincial legislative assembly] passed a 'declaration on interethnic and interracial relations' which emphasizes the importance attached by the Quebec government to all Quebecers' equality and to their participation in the province's development.

The political recognition of the development of these communities in Quebec and of the stakes involved has also led to concrete action. In 1981 the government issued its first action plan geared to cultural communities, entitled "Autant de façons d'être Québécois" ['there are many



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ways of being a Quebecker’].” Its goal is to create ways and means of establishing contacts between the majority and the various communities and its priority is to eliminate any form of discrimination or injustice toward these communities’ members, or toward the communities themselves as a whole. Particular emphasis has been placed on the implementation of a policy for equal access to employment in the public service. The creation of Equal Opportunity Programs (EOP) will be emphasized over the years and will lead to contractual obligations for firms contracting with the government, the public service equal access program with a quantifiable objective (an annual hiring rate of 12 percent of cultural community members for regular positions for each year of the program which runs from 1990 to 1994), and a network of programs in Health and Social Services, Municipal Affairs, Education, Higher Education and Science, and Public Safety. EOPs were also recently implemented in the Montreal Urban Community (MUC) and in the City of Montreal.

In another area, the Health and Social Services ministry in 1989 issued an action plan aimed at improving accessibility to services for cultural communities where language and cultural barriers may hinder such access.

In addition to the structures and programs put in place by the government to reflect Quebec’s pluralist make-up, we should also mention that in the last decade the study of cultural communities has been much in vogue among researchers in universities and research institutes.

This ferment might, in fact, be only a foretaste of what the nineties have in store for us, if we consider the following:

1. The statement of government policy on immigration and integration, "Au Québec pour bâtir ensemble" ("Building together in Quebec"), issued in December 1990 as a means of demonstrating the government’s intention to link immigration to the major challenges – demographic, economic, linguistic and cultural – facing Quebec. It also wanted to motivate Quebeckers of all origins to subscribe to its objectives and the concomitant societal choices. Contained in a moral contract in support of Quebec’s policy of immigration and integration are three principles by which individuals and society must be guided: a common language, full participation and harmonious intercommunity relations. The government’s goal encompasses society as a whole, its institutions, and its citizens;
2. The government’s action plan, issued in Spring 1991, for implementation of its statement. This plan commits 43 ministries and agencies and systematizes government action in immigration and integration;
3. The parliamentary committee forum held after the publication of the statement, which heard 70 agencies and individuals from all sectors: employers/unions; municipalities/schools/institutions; representatives of cultural communities; Montreal/regions.



## ***Quebec Cultural Communities: a Multi-faceted Field Requiring Customized Tools***

At this point the need for knowledge and information about cultural communities, and for clear definitions of the programs' target groups, is being felt at all levels of Quebec society.

### **Identification Criteria and Definitions: a Complex task and Multiple Responses**

The term "cultural communities" refers to populations originating from immigration (both first generation and subsequent ones). It is possible to organize them according to quantifiable statistics such as country of birth, mother tongue, language spoken at home, ethnicity or religion.

This definition, quantitative in nature, is limited to ethnocultural variables that allow for identification of specific populations on the basis of the criteria selected. However, we can quickly see how difficult it is to apply this definition of cultural communities when using more than one identification criterion. Each of the variables makes it possible to identify specific communities but none covers them all.

The term "cultural communities" also encompasses a sociological aspect. Who speaks of community, speaks of a social reality that is identifiable by institutions, by representatives. It means considering the communities' lives, their vitality, their degree of organization, and also the organizational forms they take. This aspect is linked on one hand to the individuals' feeling of belonging to the community (an identification criterion that is both objective and subjective), and on the other hand to the very definition of cultural communities which must include, apart from the quantitative angle, the qualitative components of their internal organizational life and their relations with others.

A ministry such as MCCI must necessarily take into account the various facets of the definition and of the ethnic identification process.

In an attempt to clarify this complex, multifaceted field, the Ministry last year issued "profiles" of 49 of Quebec's cultural communities, setting out statistical data (size, immigration periods, immigration waves, age groups, sex ratios, mother tongue, knowledge of French and English, schooling levels for ages 15 and over, labour force status, main professions among employed labour force, main activity sectors, place of residence) together with supplementary information about organizational life (main celebrations, institutions, organizations, principal media, and documentary sources). These profiles are intended to make it easier for institutions to interact with the communities, by giving them a quantitative picture and a few qualitative details.

As well, the Ministry must have available a complete, up-to-date databank of ethnographic information. The databank must be developed and managed in such a way as to facilitate the work of identifying the target groups, locating them, and determining their needs so that programs fostering the integration process may be designed.

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The census makes it possible to evaluate the components of Quebec's population on the basis of various ethnocultural variables that will define the clientele: immigrant population, population by country of birth, mother tongue, language spoken at home, and ethnicity. Religion is also considered a means of reaching specific communities.

The census also makes it possible to take into account the socio-demographic and socio-economic characteristics of immigrant and ethnocultural populations, to compare them to that of Quebec's population as a whole, and to diagnose specific problems. The databanks must be able to provide data on each population per se and in cross-reference. Analysis of the characteristics of immigrant and ethnocultural populations underscores control variables such as sex, age, immigration period, and age upon arrival for the immigrant population. As well, populations classified by language or by ethnic origin must be differentiated on the basis of immigration status.

Because of its role and its mission, the Ministry is able to provide leadership and advice for gaining knowledge of cultural communities within the government and the parapublic sector as well as among all participants in the arena of immigration and cultural communities. Such activities are very diversified, as are the possible action scenarios. This means that the MCCI's ethnocultural databank must also be multifaceted and geared to serve multiple and varied objectives.

In addition, cultural communities are not set in concrete – some identification criteria may replace others over time. One example is mother tongue, which may be lost over a few generations as a result of linguistic mobility; another is the number and frequency of multiple replies given in 1986 to the question of ethnic origin.

When seeking to reach certain target populations for the purposes of policies or programs, options are selected on the basis of the limitations inherent in each ethnocultural variable. The criteria vary with the aims, so that the flexibility required to best meet the needs may be achieved. Let us look at some choices that have been made in recent years.

- For the Quebec employment equity program aimed at members of cultural communities, various definitions were examined before the target groups were selected; among them:
  1. Visible minorities (clientele selected under contractual obligation; visible minorities means members of cultural communities of a race other than the White race);
  2. Visible minorities and Southern Europeans (proposed by the Cultural Communities Council in a notice published in 1988);



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3. Visible minorities, allophones, anglophones and Franco-Europeans (population reached by the human resources office during the public service census in 1986).

In the end, the clientele targeted by the program was defined as being visible minorities and persons whose mother tongue was not French or English. These groups are in fact underutilized; i.e. there is a gap between their representation in the public service and their availability on the market. Franco-Europeans who are not members of visible minorities are excluded because they are currently well represented in the public service. For anglophones who are not members of a visible minority, measures might be developed later on to promote their entry.

- ▶ The target groups of the contractual obligation program are visible minorities; data have shown that in the private sector, these persons are facing obstacles to employment and their academic and professional training is not a guarantee of a job commensurate with their level of training. This does not exclude EOPs for a given sector, but how would we determine which cultural communities are victims of discrimination in employment under a program which applies to the whole of the private sector?
- ▶ The MUC, for its part, with a clear diagnosis that cultural communities within its territory were underrepresented on its various employment rolls, was in a position to extend the EOP to all ethnocultural groups other than French or British.
- ▶ Under the plan for access to health and social services, the Ministry of Health and Social Services identifies its clientele as being "Quebeckers in the various minority ethnocultural and racial communities." Ethnic, racial or linguistic origins must not present a barrier to quality services.
- ▶ For its policy statement, the government used the general term "Quebeckers in cultural communities" to designate both immigrants and cultural communities. The latter refer, of course, to Quebeckers whose origin is not French, British or aboriginal.

The document specifies that this term, for lack of a more satisfactory one, makes it possible to highlight two significant sociological facts: on the one hand, the continued allegiance to cultures of origin and participation in the life of a particular community; and, on the other, the persistence of specific problems impeding full participation in society because of ethnicity.

In their submissions to the legislative committee, the great majority of the writers also used the term "Quebeckers in cultural communities" without defining it and without referring to any specific concept, such as origin or linguistic population. Some have reservations about the term; it is either folkloric or not integrative in nature. Others find it too limiting or applicable only



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to certain groups, since no component of society can be considered culturally or ethnically neutral.

Among the expressions frequently used to identify or characterize cultural communities, in whole or in part, are these:

- cultural and ethnic minorities;
- immigrants from traditional or non-traditional sources;
- ethnocultural communities;
- members of ethnocultural groups other than French, British or aboriginal;
- Quebecers of recent lineage, or of older lineage;
- communities born of immigration;
- Quebecers of various origins;
- ethnic minorities and racial minorities;
- members of visible minorities;
- the various ethnocultural communities.

This plethora of terms, definitions or clienteles is part and parcel of all the ferment of the eighties in Quebec's multifaceted society, and the necessity for Quebec institutions and organizations to adapt to this society.

It is easy to see that much is required for a better understanding:

- there is a need for statistical information (size of community, socio-cultural characteristics of members, socio-economic characteristics);
- we need qualitative knowledge (history, culture, means of integration into Quebec society);
- there should be training sessions fostering awareness of cultures and cultural differences.

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### **Knowledge of Cultural Communities: Tools Adapted to needs**

Quebec's experience has shown that cultural communities have to be looked at as full entities, using all the sources of data possible to quantify them, characterize them, and discuss their modes of insertion and integration. As already noted, cultural communities are not a rigid constant but on the contrary require a flexibility which recognizes that the right tool may change with each need, each situation, and over time. In fact, this is how it has been in the past.

### **Traditions and changes - a review**

Both in Quebec and in Canada as a whole, there has been a long tradition in the gathering of data on ethnocultural populations, perhaps more so than in other countries.

This interest developed right from the time of the creation of Upper and Lower Canada in the nineteenth century, and has since been marked by both tradition and frequent adjustments. The adjustments followed changes in immigration patterns and in the ethnocultural composition of the population, as well as changes in the immigrant selection policy and in community values. More recently, in the eighties, there was the establishment of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and the various programs it engendered. Adjustments were made in both the number of variables gathered and the wording of the variables.

Ethnocultural data were collected largely through censuses and to a lesser extent through various administrative files.

For over a century, Canadian censuses have maintained a consistent interest in the ethnocultural composition of the population. Commencing either in the nineteenth century or the early twentieth century, questions appeared for recording the place of birth, ethnic origin, religion, and mother tongue of the inhabitants of the various provinces.

There has been a long-standing continuity in the recording of these four variables. At times, however, other variables were added in response to certain needs. Four times, in 1891, 1921, 1931 and 1971, place of birth of parents was requested. We did not find any publications explaining why these variables were added; nevertheless we may assume that there was a felt need to determine the importance in the host society of the major waves of immigration that occurred just before these dates, both in the immigrant population itself and in its children. There is indeed a correlation between these four dates and the periods of increased immigration in the years 1882-1991, in the first three decades of this century, and finally in the fifties and sixties; the coincidence is too systematic to be fortuitous.

In 1971 a new question on the language most often spoken at home was introduced into the census to obtain a better picture of the language situation. The question arose out of a

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recommendation of the Bilingualism and Biculturalism Commission, whose work in the sixties had underscored the disadvantaged position of francophones both in Quebec and outside of Quebec and the need to better understand the language situation. Interest in this question, cross-referenced with that on mother tongue, has not declined since, and is not likely to decline in the coming years, given this question's importance – at least for Quebec. Quebec's distinct character and minority language position on the American continent forces it to keep a close eye on the language situation on its territory.

Apart from changes in the number of variables included on census forms, there were also changes in the wording of the questions themselves. The question on ethnic origin is the one that has undergone the most changes over the years. This is understandable, since ethnicity is a concept that may be interpreted in different ways. Interpretation varies with both the political and the world situation.

Until 1941 the wording of the question was imprecise and requested "racial origin," which at the time meant mostly European origins. There was a recommendation to make a distinction between the country of origin and "racial origin," since some races could be found in several countries and some countries could have several races. Origin was defined along paternal lines, except for the aboriginal population. It is not surprising that people spoke of the "French-Canadian race" when speaking of persons of French origin. In fact, this imprecision in the definition was not too much of a problem, insofar as the population was still largely British or French, or at least of European origin.

In 1951, that is just six years after the Second World War, and this is no doubt not fortuitous, the word "racial" was dropped from the wording of the question on origin. Instructions to census-takers stipulated that origin concerned the cultural group (sometimes wrongly called racial group) to which the person belonged. The language spoken by the person or the paternal ancestor on first coming to this continent was to guide the determination of origin. In 1961 the question became more precise and asked "To what ethnic or cultural group did you or your ancestor (on the male side) belong on coming to this continent?" The 1961 question also offered 31 preselected choices that could help the census-taker. The question remained largely the same until 1981 with, however, fewer preselected choices. In 1981 the restriction to paternal ancestry was eliminated, owing to the influence of feminism. The changes, although normal in themselves, were to seriously complicate the processing and analysis of ethnic origin data by leading to the advent of multiple responses. When to this was added the diversification of immigration sources, there were bound to be changes in the measurement of ethnic or cultural origin. It is not surprising that since 1981 major or minor changes have continually been made to the wording of the origin question in an attempt to satisfy all users. The problem is considerable, since users are many and interests wide-ranging.



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In 1986 the wording invited respondents to state multiple origins and no longer related the origin of the respondent or the ancestor to the origin upon coming to the continent. This enabled Latin Americans and people from the Caribbean to define themselves, if they wished, according to their country of origin, and it gave respondents the freedom to reply to this question either according to their current allegiance or according to their ancestral origins. In 1991, the wording returned to the ancestral origin: "To which ethnic or cultural group(s) did this person's ancestors belong?"

The reason for reviewing all these changes here is to emphasize that both Canada as a whole and Quebec in particular are continually seeking the one definition that will best satisfy as many users as possible.

Insofar as the impact of various programs can best be monitored through access to time series from which medium- and long-term projections may be drawn, data collection in the future will reflect that of the past, i.e. it will be based both on necessary tradition and on the need to create tools adapted to new circumstances and current needs.

### **Outlook for the Future: Necessary Adjustments**

There is no universal, unique criterion for defining all the cultural communities, whether for administrative or for research purposes. Defining the criterion requires us to consider all the ethnocultural variables of the census: birthplace, ethnic origin, mother tongue, language spoken in the home, and religion, and at the same time include population distinctions based on immigrant status, and for the immigrant population, based on the period of immigration.

Since Quebec has opened up to immigration, it appears pertinent to consider reinserting in the next census a question on the parents' birthplace. This question would enable us to identify correctly the second generation arising from immigration, to compare its integration with that of the first, and also to compare its specific characteristics with those of the rest of the population.

A sociological view of the definition of cultural communities leads us to the concept of the members' allegiance to a community; in turn this places particular emphasis on the ethnic origin variable.

The wording in the 1991 Census, which seeks to determine ancestral origin, appears problematic from a user's point of view, because there is no question concerning the respondents' current allegiance. We are well aware that Statistics Canada recognizes the importance of the two facets of the ethnicity concept and is looking for ways to address them. The National Census Test conducted in 1988 is proof of it, as is the fact that this conference is being held.

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As users of this item of information, we can only reiterate the many needs which justify asking two questions on ethnic origin. As concerns ancestral origin, we will have to evaluate the results obtained from the question asked in 1991. However, we already know that its use will entail serious operational imprecisions, because the referents used by the respondent are necessarily multiple and unidentified.

As to the respondents' allegiance, in this day and age it is becoming essential to determine it. We need to know whether the ancestral origin still retains a cultural continuity for the person, whether the respondents still wish to recognize their remote origins as a current factor of otherness. In our intercultural times, we would go so far as to say that this need is greater than that of knowing the ancestral origin.

The subject of ethnic origin also leads to a discussion of the concept of "visible minorities" and its operationalization. In the eighties we tended to characterize, or quantify, the groups targeted by specific policies and programs. The use of ethnocultural data from the census for the purposes of the Employment Equity Act is a good example.

Legislative implementation has had to take place within the limits of the census data. The working group formed by representatives of Statistics Canada, Employment and Immigration Canada and the Secretary of State has worked to determine the status of visible minority members on the basis of the ethnic origin variable combined with the birthplace, mother tongue, and religion (in 1981, not available in 1986). Although users of these data must always be aware of the difficult choices concerning the inclusion or exclusion of some persons, they benefit from the strategies developed by the group to enumerate visible minorities. The 1991 Census will in fact enable users to use "visible minorities" as a derived variable.

It is possible to improve the approach to this variable. We are thinking of a question to be put directly to the persons being enumerated. The National Census Test reflected this view; however, the wording of the question should perhaps explain the context, justifying its being asked, and should be limited to asking the respondents whether they consider themselves as being part of a visible minority for the purposes of the Employment Equity Act. Further, if the question on the parents' birthplace is included in the next census (specify birthplace of father and of mother), it will then be possible to better engineer the "visible minority" variable and to monitor the integration of the second generation and measure the persistence or non-persistence of various types of discrimination.

If a derived variable is developed for visible minorities then this should probably also be done for cultural communities. In order to maintain the necessary flexibility in our approach to cultural communities we would then have to select several options, not just a single one. Such standardizations would not exclude the need to come back to the ethnocultural data themselves.



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However, they would have the advantage of offering an operational solution for users for specific purposes.

The MCCI also intends to update its ethnocultural bank with the 1991 Census data. There will be increased activity around the development of this databank in response to various needs that have become increasingly significant following the government's policy statement and action plan. The Ministry must be able to supply the stakeholders and participants with the data and the tools that will enable them to target and characterize specific populations. We will have to ensure the dissemination of data, studies or research projects; work to make the population aware of the reality and the characteristics of the subgroups in the Quebec population; provide support to other ministries and organizations; and develop appropriate diagnostic tools.

Apart from the ethnocultural bank itself, based on census data, the MCCI also has a research program focusing on various questions of high priority in the area of immigration and integration (longitudinal-type field surveys, qualitative approaches, and polls).

The policy statement and action plan have intensified the work of identifying immigrant clienteles and cultural communities in government administrative and other records. There is a need to monitor these populations so as to enhance our understanding of the processes of insertion and integration into Quebec society, and especially to foster the necessary institutional adaptation and access to services.

Some records already take account of ethnocultural variables (e.g., civil status, education, health and social services), and allow us to deliver better services. Efforts in this regard will continue.

Insofar as the government and other Quebec institutions are required to adjust to the pluralist reality, and consequently, are called upon in their respective fields to increase their knowledge of cultural community membership, it is certain that the collection of information will become more general in the coming years. The MCCI's mission over time will require it to support this increased awareness and to structure data collection to address specific needs. Each organization will develop the necessary variables for targeting the appropriate clientele. Harmonization and flexibility will be the watchwords. The MCCI must also enhance the consultation process between its partners, both internal and external, so that specific needs may be grouped together, common priorities identified, and cooperation throughout project implementation assured.

### **Conclusion**

The wave of increased activity surrounding immigration and cultural communities which began in the eighties and continues to mount has affected Quebec's current needs. These needs, which are many, are present in all circles. Where census data is concerned, we believe that what is required of us is to:



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1. maintain all ethnocultural variables, including religion, which had been dropped from the 1986 Census;
2. split the ethnic origin question not only to obtain replies as to ancestral origin, but also and mainly to determine current community allegiance;
3. restore on an ad hoc basis a question on the parents' birthplace (of both father and mother);
4. again consider asking a direct question on whether the respondent belongs to a visible minority in relation to employment equity programs;
5. consider operationalizing the concept of cultural communities by selecting more than one option and thus several standardization profiles.

This conference, notwithstanding its objectives, must not lose sight of the fact that the needs of an institutional user, as expressed here, are related to the specific objectives of various policies and programs aimed at promoting full participation in the life of the community and the development of harmonious intercommunity relations.

What may seem like an urgent need now may eventually disappear, by reason of the cultural communities's integration process. For example, it may be that the question on ancestral origin may disappear in two or three more censuses, when respondents will no longer want to refer to their remote origins as a current factor of otherness. Likewise employment equity programs may also fade away if they are successful.

In its response to the needs of users, the census must be flexible. The aspects discussed today must not be viewed as leading to immutable decisions. Census data will always be collected on the basis of tradition but with necessary adjustments.

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# **Socio-political Context**



# *The Politics of the Census: A Reflection of the Dilemmas in U.S. Society*

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It is a common misconception to associate the introduction of race and ethnic identifiers in the census with the 1960s and the Civil Rights Movements. For many, awareness of race and ethnicity is closely aligned with the political significance that such information assumed in that era in U.S. history. In the 1960s public consciousness was further heightened when race and ethnic data were used to demonstrate underrepresentation and unequal outcomes. It is a common error because it is within the political context that race and ethnicity data emerge as a critical element in assessing "social progress" or lack thereof.

In actuality, the development of race and ethnicity measures in the U.S. decennial censuses (Estrada 1976) reminds us that politics and race/ethnic identification have been historically related since the founding of the U.S. Racial differentiation, at least in terms of Slave and White, became part of the nation's polity from a political compromise that made possible the ratification of the U.S. Constitution. Most of the Asian "nationality" categories were introduced from political solutions to concerns regarding immigration. And in 1980, due to urgings from within government and advocacy from within the Hispanic community, a Hispanic identifier was asked of all respondents, despite the fact that Hispanics represented but seven percent of the nation's population.

U.S. decennial censuses should reflect the historical political needs of the country. The usual criteria for a question to be contained on the decennial form are: 1) that the information meet national interests (usually defined as meeting constitutional or legislative mandates); 2) that the information be required for small geographic areas; 3) that the information be shown to be reliable and valid; and finally 4) that the significance of historical continuity of data be considered. Data on race and ethnicity have always met all of these criteria. Thus, they are likely to continue to be collected and disseminated; however, what has changed is the debate about how that information should or should not be utilized for social policy decisions. As long as the U.S. is embroiled in deciphering issues which are associated with, or markedly determined by, race and ethnicity, then racial and ethnic data will be an essential part of the critical policy debates, both as data to inform the debate and as a target of the policy debate. Thus, census consideration of racial and ethnic statistics is unlike discussions regarding other census information. The heated and often strident debates reflect the ascension of and increased dependency upon census data as tools for policy decision-making as well as the current political dilemmas regarding whether race and ethnicity should hold a privileged status in U.S. society.



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This paper serves as a reminder that government doctrine and policy with regard to race and ethnicity have changed significantly over time. Information on race and ethnicity, once viewed as neutral and somewhat passive, became a proactive instrument to guide social change. Collected since the inception of this country, race and ethnic information in the hands of some decision-makers has resulted in more rational allocation of social services based on the identification and targeting of concentrations of poor minority groups. In the hands of others, race and ethnic data have resulted in gerrymandering – fragmenting the vote of minority communities to dilute their voting power and still for others, race and ethnic data provide an ongoing statistical portrayal of the lives of non-dominant segments of the population which is instructive in understanding the workings of our society. Race and ethnic data in the present context are not innocuous. The motives behind the use of race and ethnic information must be regarded and, when possible, challenged by users with different perspectives.

The first section of this paper describes my working view of racial and ethnic identity. The second section continues with an historical section associating critical periods in U.S. political history and the use of race and ethnicity data from the census. The final section focuses more specifically on the U.S. Bureau of the Census and looks at the future of the politics of race and ethnicity in the U.S.

### **Race and Ethnic Identity: from within and outside**

One has to consider whether ethnic and racial identity is being defined by insiders or by outsiders. The definition of ethnicity that most appeals to me is by Erikson (1968) who attempts to include the psychological aspects of self along with the external dimensions of culture, history and society. On the relationship between culture and identity he wrote, "Identity is a process 'located' in the core of the individual and yet also in the core of his communal culture, a process which establishes, in fact, the identity of those two identities ..." (Erikson 1968, 22).

Unlike other definitions that emphasize concerns with identity dilemmas or crisis, for Erikson identity implied a sense of direction and purpose. At the individual level, ethnic and racial identity is an organizing system; it helps to situate oneself among others and to differentiate oneself from others. As such, it provides a system for organizing one's life and activities. This explains why it is possible to depend upon self-selection as a highly reliable and valid method for measuring race and ethnicity.

Ethnic identity at the group level comes from outside. Ethnic identification is a kind of social identification that imputes ethnic attributes to a person. In short, at least initially ethnic background, membership and identity are defined and ascribed by other people. One is not born "ethnic" but rather ethnicity is largely constructed from without and tends to be reinforced through culture, language and the meaning therein conveyed from an early age onwards.

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Under conditions of negative socialization in ethnically stratified societies, the external "forcing" of an ethnic identity by others frequently takes place. These "others" may be ethnic "outsiders", ethnic "insiders" or both. When ethnic identity is thus externally enforced and conditioned, namely when no free rational choice is exercised in the identity decision-making process, then one may refer to such conditions as characteristic of an oppressive ethnic identification.

The interrelationship between the individual and group identity is complex. Sherover-Marcuse (1986, 1) argues that social oppression implied systematic and pervasive mistreatment of some human beings which was "justified" in terms of their membership in certain groups. She also differentiated between the "normalized" form of discrimination and the more openly violent forms of oppression. The institutionalized form of social oppression, namely ethnic discrimination, included the "invalidation, denial, or the non-recognition of the humanness (the goodness, smartness, powerfulness, etc.)" of individuals and groups who are targets of that form of mistreatment.

While not all minority group members are equally exposed to oppressive experiences, to the extent that oppression is structurally patterned in society, it is difficult not to suffer some of its adverse direct or indirect consequences.

### **Race and Ethnic Identity as a Basis for Mobilization**

Shapiro (1972) argued that individual liberation often antecedes engagement in social action. He illustrated his views with examples from the women's and Black liberation movements where peer-group support and validation enhanced the individual's sense of self-worth and empowerment.

Blacks and Chicanos did, in fact, mobilize on an ethnic basis and raised claims of human rights, social equality and self-determination in the U.S. Those ethnic liberation movements also denounced the colonization of ethnic identity while making ethnic identity one of their core concepts for organizing and ethno-mobilization, combining linguistic/cultural claims with demands for economic, social and political equality. A positive ethnic identity was regarded as a sound basis for social mobilization towards racial and ethnic equality.

Sherover-Marcuse (1986, 1) uses the interesting concept of "emancipatory consciousness" which is defined "as the form of subjectivity that tends towards a rupture with the historical system of domination". This view on emancipatory self-image implies a process demanding an explicit transformation of how one views oneself relative to others.

Erikson's interpretation of the widespread preoccupation with racial and ethnic identity among minorities involved in various liberation movements went beyond those who viewed it solely as a response to alienation. Erikson considered this preoccupation as a "corrective" trend in



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historical evolution which enabled minorities to break up the system between the negative self-identity of some minorities and those with a vested interest in maintaining the negative identity of minorities.

Erikson's perspective is appealing because it conveys a sense of process, of an identity always changing and developing. In his own words, "(Identity) then also contains a complementarity of past and future both in the individual and in the society: it links the actuality of a living past with that of a promising future ..." (Erikson 1966).

While the notions of personality and identity resemble each other in the sense of "identifiable" continuity in one's life, they also markedly differ. Personality usually refers to the determinacy of early experiences in the adult life of the individual while identity implies developmental changes as the person actively interacts with and recreates external conditions (Bacal 1989).

With this in mind, it is possible to see how race and ethnic identity can become politicized. At the individual level it represents a recognition of emancipatory self-worth; at the group level it provides for a basis for collective action; and as an ongoing process it can evolve to encompass the desire for change in the nature of society.

### **Changing Uses of Race and Ethnic Data**

One way to illustrate the changing views of race and ethnic data is to discuss how government policies in regard to race have changed over time. Several turbulent social periods in recent history are associated with these changes.

The United States in the post-World War II era faced an enormous contradiction between the antiracist rhetoric of the war effort and the state-sponsored and -enforced system of racial segregation and oppression at home. World War II created many changes – Blacks, Hispanics and Asians enlisted in the military, other minorities went to work in war industries. The war contributed, in part, to the migration of Blacks from the rural South to cities. This is the same period in which Puerto Ricans arrived in large numbers in the New York metropolitan area and Mexican origin persons began to urbanize in the Southwest. The Japanese, by contrast, were interned in camps on the west coast.

In the post-World War period, both institutional and individual racism pervaded U.S. life in the form of the exclusion and segregation of minorities as well as racially explicit intimidation and violence. The primary means of social control were the Jim Crow laws (Marable 1984). In 1896, the Supreme Court handed down a decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson* which determined race relations for the next 60 years. Responding to legislation in Louisiana which required railroads to provide separate but equal accommodations for passengers, a group of Blacks from New Orleans sued for integrated accommodations. The majority opinion noted "that the [fourteenth]



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amendment's framers must have understood that there was a deep natural aversion to racial intermingling" (Nieman 1991, 111) and that the amendment required only equal protection before the law, not such "social" qualities as integrated accommodations. The deeply entrenched Jim Crow laws permeated all aspects of life, determining among other things where one could be born, live, eat, be schooled and be buried.

Statistical information on minorities was available at this time and was utilized primarily to describe these populations. The quality of national level information on race and ethnicity varied considerably from area to area. In the rural South, many Black births were not registered; in the Southwest information was only available for Mexican-origin persons who were foreign-born.

It was this world of enforced racial segregation that Blacks in the South and Mexican Americans in the Southwest sought to challenge through political action and, increasingly, resistance and protest (Carmichael and Hamilton 1967). Challenging segregation at lunch counters, schools, public transportation and the polls, minorities found a collective voice in the formation of civil rights organizations such as the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) in Chicago, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the G.I. Forum and League of United Latin Americans and the Mexican-American Legal Defense and Education Fund in Texas. The founding leaders of these organizations recognized the significance of available data and their proclamations, legal briefs and testimony draw upon available race and ethnic information. In the case of the Hispanic population, during these early years the amount of available information for Blacks exceeded that of Hispanics. As a result, the desire for information on Hispanic populations becomes a primary concern for Hispanic groups.

### **Anti-discrimination**

In the year 1941, the Supreme Court in *Mitchell v. United States* argued that individuals, not groups of individuals, are entitled to equality before the law and therefore that equal accommodation must be afforded to individuals regardless of levels of demand. This was the first of many challenges to the separate but equal doctrine. The slow pace at which change was achieved by the courts caused some to seek fundamental change through more dramatic means. A. Philip Randolph, president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, organized a March on Washington to galvanize Black workers' frustrations with continuing exclusion from jobs. The march was averted when in June 1941 President Franklin D. Roosevelt, heeding these demands for equal access, issued Executive Order 8-802 which established that "there shall be no discrimination in the employment of workers in defense industries or government because of race, creed, color, or national origin" (Bennett 1979). Once again, this was an initial step in the dismantling of the legal barriers to full participation in U.S. life.

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The fact that the circumstances for minorities in the U.S. did not change perceptibly after 350 years of racial discrimination focused attention on the structural conditions of poverty and ghetto life which shape economic relationships. The more militant liberation movements, as noted by Carmichael and Hamilton (1967), went beyond the problem of legal rights to address the problems of secondary positioning in the social structure, of historic economic exclusion, and of the cultural diminution of Black life which Blacks continued to face following the attainment of civil rights.

This period of time is significant because it is the time when the use of advocacy statistics emerged. Data on schooling outcomes were used in school segregation cases. Information from the census was used to calculate residential segregation patterns. The census informed the public of the conditions of poverty in metropolitan inner cities. Information from other sources, such as voter registrars, health agencies and school districts, was also used by public officials, legal staff and community spokespersons as evidence of the secondary status afforded to Blacks and Mexican-Americans in the U.S.

### **Setting Standards for Affirmative Action**

Affirmative action appeared for the first time in federal policy in 1961 when President Kennedy issued Executive Order 10925 in which federal contractors were instructed to act affirmatively to recruit workers on a nondiscriminatory basis. Within a decade, affirmative action ascended to the forefront of race politics and evolved into a complex set of programs and policies guiding employers and educational institutions toward integration objectives (Glazer and Moynihan 1975). This Executive Order assigned to federal contractors the responsibility of assuming an affirmative role in achieving equal opportunity. The standard of access was the degree to which employers reflected the civilian labor force of the area.

In 1965, President Johnson issued Executive Order 11426 by which the Department of Labor was directed to establish the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP). This agency was to monitor hiring policies among federal contractors and ensure that employees were hired without regard to race, that job opportunities were widely publicized and that employers sought out job applicants who might otherwise not apply due to previous discrimination. In 1968, revised guidelines for OFCCP added gender to the list of affirmative action protections and instructed employers to assess deficiencies in the equality of employment opportunity within their organization and to develop timetables and policies to address these deficiencies. Additional guideline revisions in 1971 directed employers to assess underutilization of protected groups. With the introduction in the early 1970s of the concepts of deficiencies and underutilization, affirmative action policy required that federal contractors actively pursue racial and gender integration and that statistical parity would be the standard against which progress would be measured. Affirmative action programs among federal contractors were dictated by



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the federal government; expectations for private firms were addressed through the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) established by the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

In about 25 years the government made the transition from actively maintaining and promoting racial segregation to racial impartiality and then to a stance of mandating a standard of restructuring of racial representation.

Under these circumstances, the implications of the availability and accuracy of racial and ethnic information become paramount. When the information is available, the government had the means to advocate on behalf of the disadvantaged. Without that information, illegal practices could not be challenged.

### **Challenge to Affirmative Action**

Beginning in the mid-1970s affirmative action programs have been challenged. Charles Murray (1984) argued that affirmative action programs contradict the progressive trajectory of America society towards a color-blind society in which race and ethnicity are neutral characteristics. Conservative economist, Walter Williams (1982), citing the case of minorities in other societies and Asians in the U.S., argues that racial prejudice and even state-sponsored discrimination do not eliminate the possibility of economic success. According to Williams, the government initially and properly sought to establish equality of access but the objectives of racial justice have improperly shifted to achieve parity in representation. Race and economics similarly concern Thomas Sowell (1984), who argues that affirmative action programs undermine the advancement of Blacks in American economic life. Like other conservative writers of this period, Sowell notes that affirmative action represents a substantial redirection of the government's role regarding race and characterizes this change as the abandonment of racial neutrality and the standard of color-blind decision-making in favor of allocation by membership in racial and ethnic groups. Like Williams, Sowell is supportive of the concept of equal individual opportunity and critical of the concept of equal group results. Like the writers noted above, sociologist Nathan Glazer (1987) asserts that affirmative action represents an abandonment of the concept of individual claims to consideration on the basis of justice and equity to be replaced with a concern for the rights of publicly determined and delimited racial and ethnic groups. Central to Glazer's argument is his description of the American ethnic pattern based on three central premises: 1) that settlement in the U.S. would be open to people throughout the world; 2) that no racial or ethnic group would be allowed to establish an independent political entity; and, 3) that no group would be required to surrender its character and distinctiveness as the price of full entry into American society. This ethnic pattern, Glazer argues, leads to a racially and ethnically neutral, color-blind society unencumbered by prejudice or privilege which is racially or ethnically determined.



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The power of these arguments has been affirmed by the number of voices echoing these sentiments and by the translation of these ideas from the level of policy discourse to that of political action and also by the degree to which the idea that affirmative action constitutes an injustice to people of European descent has achieved wide currency within the present administration.

### **Information and Politics**

One cannot ignore the increasingly quantitative nature of our society. Over the years, decision-making has placed a higher value on the use of objective facts to assess and to determine allocation. Hundreds of congressional legislative acts in the U.S. require census data for the identification of eligibility or for the purposes of allocation of funds. Former director of the census, Vince Barraba, notes that the decennial census process came out of the shadows and into the harsh light of scrutiny when it was discovered that census numbers had dollar signs before them. While true, for minority groups in the U.S. the monetary benefits were less important than the significance that these data represented in affirming their realities.

The following statements are taken from public testimony at regional hearings during the mid-1970s in preparation for the 1980 Census. Hispanic identifiers were available for the first time after the 1970 Census; however, rather than one identifier, the Census Bureau provided five separate identifiers, creating some confusion about the number of Hispanics in the U.S. In this context, Hispanic leaders were concerned about prior decisions by the Census Bureau and were advocating for inclusion of the Hispanic identifier for the use of the Spanish origin item on a 100 percent level (for all respondents). These statements illustrate these sentiments and the rhetoric that targeted the Census Bureau and other governmental agencies.

The starting point for these advocates was to establish the outsider status of the Hispanic community.

... for too many years now, the Spanish-speaking have been denied access to many of this country's institutions and have been callously barred from the mainstream of American life. Our community has not been offered the opportunity to share the benefits this country has to offer on the same basis as other citizens, and we have often been prevented from fully and equally participating in the political, economic, social, and cultural life of the U.S. ... (Fierro 1975).

Secondly, the lack of appropriate information from governmental sources is blamed for the lack of resources to overcome existing barriers. National statistics are targeted in large part because Hispanics are attempting to break away from the perception of a regional minority and trying to be regarded as a national minority, like Blacks and Asians.

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This state of affairs has been exacerbated by the absence of accurate and current data on the status of the Spanish-speaking and, as a consequence, our unique and particular needs have generally been ignored; and we often fail to receive the proportional share of assistance to which we are justly entitled because of serious informational gaps and the lack of meaningful statistics and data ... (Lucero 1975).

Beyond any question, if the Spanish-speaking are to advance and receive proper recognition, it is essential that we have accurate information. It is a tragic commentary that agencies like the Bureau of the Census, Department of Labor, Office of Management and Budget, and the other federal agencies can neither furnish realistic nor accurate data today on the Spanish-speaking.

If a real commitment to aid this country's Spanish-speaking community is to be made and pursued, we must know where we stand, and we must have the basic facts on which to build viable, workable programs (Fierro 1975)

Thirdly, the charge is made that the government has been lax in responding to these urgent needs.

The federal government must have pertinent and faultless information in order to effectively identify the urgent and special needs of our community. Certain fundamental data are needed if we are to come to grips with the problems of poverty, deprivation, poor education and housing, unemployment and underemployment, disease and malnutrition which are plaguing our community today.

What is even worse is the blatant indifference of these agencies in taking affirmative steps to correct these gross inequities and move to compile and disseminate accurate social and economic statistics on the Spanish-speaking community (Fierro 1975).

We are not insensitive to the magnitude of the task of counting the population of a vast country such as the United States. However, the Census Bureau's historical and continuing undercount of Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans and other Latinos is blatant not only because of its extent, but because of the accompanying intransigence and contempt demonstrated thus far by the Census Bureau in its reluctance to correct the situation (Lucero 1975).

Next, concern is shown for the method of classifying race and ethnicity with an assertion that past decisions were explicitly made to ignore this segment of the population.



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It shouldn't be necessary for me to delve into the fields of anthropology, or sociology, or into the history of Latin America and the southwestern United States in order to impress upon the Census Bureau the fact that we, that is, Chicanos and other Latinos, are not "White" culturally; nor are we White racially (despite the fact that most of us are part European); and, considering the social fabric of this country, we are most definitely not White socially. And so it is obvious that this government has historically been very hypocritical, and at the same time quite clever and pragmatic, in officially identifying us as "White" on paper, and therefore not having to be bothered by us and our special problems, while knowing fully well that we are not treated as White on any level of this society, and that our civil rights are daily violated.

... Now we see and hear the phrase, "Blacks and Whites," used daily in describing this society ... While it is gratifying to see this society progress at least to this point, the insult to the rest of us by the use of such terminology is very clear, and I must charge the federal government with placing its seal of approval on such practices by officially refusing to even recognize us. I might add that there is a strong element of hypocrisy in this practice also, for if a society or government pretends to recognize one minority group while negating another, it is simply showing its insincerity toward all minority groups, and demonstrating its questionable motives (Lucero 1975).

Finally, the assertion is made that the lack of information violates the law. This is in recognition of the fact that one of the most important uses of ethnic information these days is in the determination of persons to be protected under the equal employment opportunity laws.

I submit that the situation I have described is a gross and inexcusable violation of the civil rights of all Chicanos and Latinos, for how can the government pretend to hear, leave alone redress, the grievances of a people if it doesn't even know where, or how many, of them exist within the nation's boundaries? (Fierro 1975)

For these advocates, the census was more than an "accounting" of the population. Census statistics on race and ethnicity were more than descriptors, these data represent a lens through which society determined reality and acted upon it in terms of allocating resources. For minority leaders, to be included accurately in the census meant first of all to be recognized as "existing" and having the information to call attention to the existing conditions for minorities. With this information they hoped to attain their social policy objectives. In sum, this statement indicates that without accurate and comparable data on Hispanics it will be impossible to develop policies that also reflect the needs and interests of Hispanic-Americans. Without these data, national goals would be set which would not incorporate equal opportunity for Hispanic-



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Americans. It was unacceptable that the nature of the nation's domestic problems was assessed as if Hispanic-Americans did not exist.

### **Data Accuracy as an Issue**

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the leadership of minority groups recognized the need for accurate statistical information in view of the purposes to which they could be put in bringing about desired social change. The government's use of census data for decision-making, policy studies and assessment raised the value of the data. Statistical studies of census data served as evidentiary proof in landmark legal precedents.

The U.S. Bureau of the Census responded by providing more information for more subgroups of the population and increasing the access to more kinds of information. Yet the charges against the census effort did not diminish, in large part because the focus has shifted from obtaining needed information to the issue of the accuracy of existing information.

Following each decennial census the U.S. Census Bureau has conducted evaluation studies which, among other things, have documented the persistent differential undercount of the Black population. Despite the fact that the Census Bureau specifically targets its major outreach efforts toward the "hard to enumerate", the undercount rate has not consistently declined. Comparing the census results to the demographic analysis method, in 1960 approximately 6.6 percent of the Black population was undercounted. This Black undercount rate remained essentially the same (6.5 percent) in 1970. In 1980 the undercount rate declined significantly to 4.5 percent and then rose once again in the 1990 Census to 5.7 percent. In addition, the differential undercount rate between Blacks and non-Blacks has fluctuated: 1960: 3.9 percent; 1970: 4.3 percent; 1980: 3.7 percent; and 1990: 4.4 percent. In sum, the 1990 Census results, when compared to the demographic analysis method, indicate that the accuracy of the census has regressed and the differential undercount between Blacks and non-Blacks is at an all-time high. These facts, freely admitted to by the Census Bureau, have led to the technical debate and litigation for the adjustment of the census results.

There are several new elements in this debate. For example, it is important that the litigation demanding that the census use adjusted census data was initiated by the mayors of several large metropolitan areas and counties rather than the leaders of minority group organizations. In addition, the 1990 post-enumeration survey provided additional information on undercount, indicating that Hispanics had the highest undercount rate, 5.2 percent, followed by American Indians, 5.0 percent, then Blacks, 4.8 percent, and then Asian/Pacific Islanders, 3.1 percent and finally, the White population with 1.01 percent undercount. The PES confirmed prior patterns of undercount and also added new information on the differential undercount between minority central city dwellers (5.80 percent) and non-central city non-minority residents (1.29 percent);

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differentials were also discovered between renters and homeowners; and for different sex-age groupings. This additional information fueled the debate further.

As the issue of data accuracy has emerged as a central concern, the U.S. Census Bureau is faced with more uncertainty in the collection of race and ethnicity data (Robinson and Lapham 1991). In the 1980s the Census Bureau noted a cohort effect in the Black population due to an overestimation in the early 1940s, of unregistered birth among Blacks. As a result, the Census Bureau reduced the number of Black males in the demographic analysis by 206,000 Blacks (Robinson 1991). In the 1990 Census, 9.8 million persons responding to the race item self-selected the "Other Race" item. While the vast majority of the Other Race persons were Hispanic respondents, the number of non-respondents to the traditional race labels is indicative of the extent of racial intermarriage, and shifting ethnic loyalties. In order to use the demographic analysis for comparison to the census results, the Census Bureau had to shift 497,278 persons from the Other Race category into the Black category. In addition, since the change in the method of assigning race to births, the Census Bureau estimates that the difference in the number of Black births attributable solely to different ways to assign births increased to five percent and that proportion is expected to continue to rise (Robinson 1991).

Thus, the debates regarding race and ethnicity data are likely to be exacerbated by the crosscurrents between the external demands for more accurate race and the increasing uncertainty in race and ethnicity data.

### **Future Considerations**

How does the government with a color-blind society objective balance its role as the primary source of the information on race and ethnicity? As noted above, the collection of race and ethnic data is likely to be continued for many censuses to come, if for no other reason than historical continuity of data.

For those who seek to move in directions away from the emphasis on race and ethnic identity, there will possibly be an effort to reduce the primacy of race and ethnic data in relation to other demographic data such as income. Any such efforts will surely be met with considerable outcry from those who will interpret it as another effort to mask racial and ethnic realities.

As long as race, ethnic group or religion play important roles in the distribution of prestige, status, rewards or punishment in a society, labels to designate these groups become or remain necessary and take on socially created significance. When jobs are given or withheld, promotions granted or denied, equal opportunities for education made available or not available on the basis of a person's racial, cultural or religious background, what a person is called becomes important, sometimes critical.

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That is why the Census Bureau as the primary source of race and ethnic data will continue to be in the midst, and often in the middle, of the political arena as the U.S. determines its commitment to a culturally pluralistic society.



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# *Representing Ethnicity: Political Statistexts*

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Of the many difficulties that surround definition of the imprecise concept of ethnicity, not the least is the extent to which ethnicity varies according to socio-political conditions. In multicultural Canada, where our understanding of nationhood is subject to almost daily re-evaluation and where the political stew has in recent times become an increasingly stormy brew of discontent, defining ethnocultural groups is more than an exercise in definitional consistency. The attempt to focus analytical categories inevitably requires making political and ideological choices. As in any plural society, cultural life follows the politics of domination and resistance. The census is one of the contested sites upon which relations between state and civil society are worked out.

This brief paper addresses the contested terrain of ethnicity in Canada and outlines the challenge for researchers, politicians, policy makers and data-generating bodies to reflect the political construction of ethnicity in their own representations. This challenge includes the recognition that the issues are complex and often conflicting, that technical issues of statistical accuracy often conflict with social interest and that, above all, any attempt at statistical representation is political to the core.

The challenge to census takers and to others who, for various purposes, are required to reduce social reality to a set of descriptive conventions is to be representative. "Representative" is used here in three distinct but interrelated ways. The everyday meaning has two senses: the first refers to the provision of an "accurate" typification of a group or class; the second refers to the authority, legitimacy or qualification to represent a group or class. Both meanings are subject to a range of interpretations which need to be understood in light of a third meaning, derived from recent literature in cultural studies, which claims that all representation is an ideological product by which those in power or those who would wield power — including social scientists and other commentators upon social phenomena — ideologically construct (and re-construct) a realm of meaning through the process of re-presentation.

This third meaning, drawing from a critical theoretical perspective, challenges as naive any notion that representation is a matter of establishing "truth". It directs attention beyond positive signifying relationships between people and the texts (which I shall call "statistexts" referring to census data) used to describe them and toward the discourse through which social groups are constructed.<sup>1</sup> Edward Said's notion of "orientalism" depicts well the ways in which dominant cultural groups have constructed the "other" in ways that have not simply created images along ethnic or racial lines that may be misleading, demeaning or prejudiced but, through particular representational practices, have effected unequal relations of power and have affected, in very specific but often unanticipated ways, the social conditions of represented groups. The words

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we use to reduce social groups to statistextual categories are thus political inventions. As the example of Columbus' invention of the "Indian" 500 years ago tells us, such processes involve much more than the creation of a difficult census category.

The discourse of representation is not a one-way process and any discussion of how census categories can best "reflect" the reality of ethnocultural groups needs to take account of the fluidity of social categories. Statistexts are a temporally and conceptually restricted attempt to objectify that fluidity, to freeze the social dialectic by creating an analytical suspension of belief. To so claim is not to suggest that the project of collecting ethnocultural data, impossible though it may be in principle, should be abandoned. Nor is it to ignore the significant methodological and economic problems of data collection, although these will not be discussed in this paper. It is, however, to recognize the need for critical examination of our categories and our means of establishing categories, going well beyond the difficult but nonetheless limited task of empirical abstraction (counting) to the more fundamental task of understanding how and why ethnocultural categories emerge and why we think they may be important.

The discourse has four major, and to some degree overlapping, interest groups: the statisticians or social scientists who create statistexts; the groups, including sub-groups, being textualized; other groups whose welfare is interrelated; and the vaguely defined "dominant society" which sets norms and establishes terms of legitimation in relation to all of the other three. The issue of representation applies to all four. Each has an ideological perspective, although the perspective may be incoherent or fragmentary, more or less subject to consensus within and between groups. Competing representations are therefore power struggles, displays of interest, with high stakes. As a result, the statistician faces the impossible task of representing a myriad of interpretations with a single fact or figure and contends with the inevitable situation that each fact and figure will have a myriad of interpretations.

This is much more than simply a problem of four blind persons encountering an elephant and each encountering a different creature. A change in perspective or scale will not allow a more accurate "truth" to emerge because the truth is not a question simply of composite intelligence nor is it a transcendental privilege to be bestowed upon the enlightened. It is more helpful, rather, to state what the truth of social relations is not: it is not an absolute category; it is not reducible to function or a single form; and it cannot be fixed. Having accepted these assumptions, the best efforts to create analytical truth in the form of statistexts are those that attempt to incorporate a sense of the plurality of social definitions of ethnicity, of the contested ground that such pluralities inevitably represent and of the highly contingent nature of such definitions within a rapidly shifting political context.



## **Multiculturalism: The Policy and The Politics**

Canada has been demographically multicultural since its earliest history and successive periods of immigration have contributed to a greater and greater diversity of ethnocultural backgrounds. The policy of official multiculturalism, however, grew out of expressions of pluralism that began during the late 1960s. The Liberal government under Lester B. Pearson initiated the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (B&B) in 1963 and added a fourth volume of findings to address the "other ethnic groups" (Canada 1969). To the surprise of politicians and policy makers, the proceedings leading up to publication of the report generated tremendous public interest and a strong and (for the first time) well organized lobby on the part of groups who felt their time had come for greater recognition within the mythical Canadian "mosaic". What Senator Paul Yuzyk termed the "third force" in Canadian politics had been unleashed.<sup>2</sup>

Multiculturalism became an official policy in 1971 when it was introduced by Prime Minister Trudeau with the statement that, "Although there are two official languages, there is no official culture, nor does any ethnic group take precedence over any other" (Canada 1971). Despite the oft-heard claim that multiculturalism policy is for all Canadians, it has always been directed to the "other Canadians", based on the dual principle of protection and preservation: protection of the rights of all Canadians equally, regardless of ethnocultural background; and preservation of non-founding groups as cultural entities. Since that time, the policy has expanded to become entrenched in the Canadian Multiculturalism Act (1988) and is administered by a separate ministry. The recent emphasis has been on equality rights rather than heritage preservation, with efforts to multiculturalize both government functions and society in general (Kobayashi 1992).

Both principles of multiculturalism have come under intense criticism from diverse points of view. Human rights activists argue that, despite the proliferation of equality rights legislation and programmes over the past decade, access to the benefits of Canadian society is still differential and varies according to race, class, gender, ethnicity and ability. Advocates of group rights for minority ethnocultural groups argue that the two founding groups continue to dominate the political and economic agenda and that their needs are lost in the process of political expediency. Neo-conformists and libertarians (including, most recently, the Reform Party of Canada) argue that, on the one hand, there is no need for a multiculturalism policy since all Canadians are equal and, on the other, policies that promote cultural preservation create difference and thus invite discrimination. The latter position fails, however, to provide solutions to problems of differential access and, by denying difference, re-establishes the norm of dominance.

The representation as "other" has persisted with sufficient strength that no matter what one's position on the policy there is fairly universal recognition that there are groups in Canada that can be identified according to their minority status in ways that could hardly be called celebrations of cultural diversity. Furthermore, the state plays a role in structuring the ways in



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which ethnocultural groups are defined. This is done not only through the obvious means of controlling funding, community services and official status but also through more subtle means that involve the ethnic discourse through which relations between state and civil society are mediated. Although it is beyond the scope of the present paper to develop this theme, it is important to take it into account in understanding the total process through which ethnicity is defined, especially in relation to actions on the part of ethnocultural groups themselves.

### **Ethnic Definitions and Political Interest**

One of the most serious deficiencies in the now well established field of Canadian ethnic studies is its failure to account adequately for the political dimension of relations within and among groups. Until this issue is more extensively addressed and until a sufficient body of empirical work addressing political issues has been developed, it will be difficult to formulate more satisfactory statistexts than those currently being used.

Porter's (1964) original thesis on the "vertical mosaic" represents an important attempt to come to terms with the political/economic means by which ethnocultural differences are created. Because Porter saw the construction of ethnicity as primarily a means of subordinating certain groups, however, his thesis fails to take account of the specificity of ethnocultural groups and lacks completely an analysis of the means by which relations are negotiated at the level of actual human relations. On the other hand, most of those writing in the "ethnic studies" vein since have adopted a culturalist point of view which has precluded incorporation of political and economic considerations.

More recently, a range of critical perspectives has been developed that begin to address this problem. Peter Li (1990) has called for an integration of the culturally specific with the politically general and has attempted to create such a dialectic in his own work on Chinese Canadians. An increasing number of authors are attempting to address ways in which minority ethnocultural groups may become politically empowered, especially in a context of intense negotiation over constitutional issues and the place of "other" non-dominant groups vis-à-vis the place of francophone Quebecers and members of the First Nations.

What is needed in the short term is greater understanding of the ways in which conflicting representations, tied to ideological interests, condition the emergence of ethnic group definitions. Such an agenda calls for extensive empirical work at the community level. Here I wish to provide only an outline of some of the issues current among Canadian ethnocultural groups. One example, especially appropriate in an immigrant society, is the re-presentation of far-flung discord within an often inappropriate Canadian political context. The dramatic reconfiguration of the international landscape as a result of resurgent nationalisms throughout the world inevitably has effects upon the process of ethnic definition in Canada.

European nationalisms have been played out upon the Canadian scene in various ways. The association of German with the Nazi movement before and during World War II led to a refocusing of Canadian ethnic allegiance toward groups that could be identified as other-than-German. Those with roots in the Baltic states and Eastern Europe have long expressed a fierce nationalistic pride that suffuses their community organizations in Canada and affects both their political activism as a community and the distinctive ways in which they identify their ethnicity (Lupul 1978, 1989). These groups have recently renewed ancestral ties of nationalism in light of the restructuring of the Soviet Union. Canadians of Macedonian ancestry, similarly, define themselves according to this heritage, rather than to one of the four nation states that now encompass the ancient territory of Macedonia. The relationship between the present-day Greek state and that part of Macedonia that falls within its territory is replayed in relations between the two groups in Canada.

The issue is far more complex, however, than a simple transplantation of ethnocultural allegiances based on nationalist movements elsewhere. For one thing, Canada's ethnocultural groups are influenced to one degree or another by their particular immigration histories. Those groups that were established prior to World War I and have had a relatively low level of post-World War II immigration are, naturally enough, further removed from the old issues concerning their ethnic affiliation. Others, especially those made up of refugee populations fleeing what they deem to be repressive or otherwise unacceptable regimes, often remain committed to change in their homelands long after emigration and this commitment affects their relations with other groups in Canada.

At the same time, however, the Canadian government which has always emphasised the principle that intercultural strife has no place on the Canadian multicultural agenda does everything possible – from structuring social services, to funding community organizations to, at times, outright intervention – to mediate such differences. In so doing, the state inevitably provides official recognition of one "ethnicity" over another and its subsequent representation of legitimacy cannot fail to shape the contours of multiculturalism in this country. As a result, ethnocultural groups within Canada develop political strategies that are either divisive, cooperative or, for some groups, a mixture of both. The social definition of ethnicity in Canada is thus highly ideologically charged as it is negotiated between state and community.

Ethiopian Canadians provide an excellent case in point.<sup>3</sup> They have arrived in Canada relatively recently and at a time when "Black" Canadians of an immense variety of ethnocultural backgrounds (including those with generations of North American history as well as those who have recently come from Africa or the Caribbean) have been working hard to foster a pan-African identity in the face of continuing racism at all levels of Canadian society. Ethiopian Canadians have remained aloof from such coalitions and have focused attention on fostering pan-Ethiopian linkages through the Federation of Ethiopian Canadian Associations. This association



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is officially recognized by and receives funding from the Department of Multiculturalism. It also has membership on the Canadian Ethnocultural Council (CEC).

But this official representation is considered by many Ethiopian Canadians as *legerdemain*; it masks the fact that Ethiopian Canadians are not culturally homogeneous and "Ethiopia" as a nation-state is the contested ground of several traditional groups:

While...the dominant Amhara foster a pan-Ethiopian identity, other groups like the Tigrayans, Eritrians and Oromo attempt to promote their own ethnicness. Representatives of antagonistic factions at home, the members of these groups in Canada have formed organizations...to sell sub-group distinctiveness to a government and population which does not accord them official recognition (Force 1992, 33).

Furthermore:

Given opposition to the maintenance of distinct ethnic and national identities from the Canadian government, opposition from the Ethiopian community, hostility from other African immigrants, and a general ignorance of African issues from the Canadian public as a whole, there seems little chance that the self-definition of Eritreans and Oromos will be widely recognized and accepted by external sources (Sorenson 1991, 84).

The discourse comprises a number of competing representations. The dominant view, held by public as well as official opinion, places all the groups under the primary designation of *Black*. This term has no meaning (or a different meaning) for Eritreans and Oromos who gained this particular "blackness" only upon coming to Canada. Their struggle to define themselves in their own terms is encircled by the dominant discourse on multiculturalism. The result is perhaps a lessening of tendencies to import "foreign" conflicts but it is also a reinforcement of a process of ethnocultural definition wherein conflicting representations fracture and merge along established lines of power.

The resulting statistexts are, to say the least, both reduced and modified. However little recent immigrants may relate to the established concerns of other African Canadians, the context in which they find themselves makes those concerns impossible to avoid. Furthermore, they must confront them not from the point of view of conflicting power interests as they did in their homeland but from the bottom of the social heap and from a power base that is almost non-existent. They inevitably will experience racism as *Blacks*, not as Ethiopians, and circumstances will push them to choose among a number of political strategies, including affiliation with the generic category – "Black" – that is rooted in racism but has blossomed into a symbol of political unity. This point underscores the great irony of the ways in which political discourse changes its contours.



The term "Black" is, therefore, a political and ideological statistext. No matter in which of the political contexts it is used, it re-inscribes the notion of "race" as a legitimate means of distinguishing human beings. Those who construct census categories may well recognize, in theory, that "race" is socially constructed *and* that that construction is a product of the racism whence it emerged. That does not make thereby a figment (or "pigment") of imagination for, *despite* such progressive attitudes, "race" has become a statistical truth. It is a real product of a political legacy that includes the processes of subordination (colonialism, imperialism, fascism, rampant capitalism, what-have-you) by which racism is expressed. Nonetheless, the fact that the notion of blackness has recently become useful as a means of political resistance *as well as* a means of discrimination means that it will be some time yet before this particular human perversity is transcended and the creators of statistexts will continue to play a major role in the process.

The case of Canadians of South Asian ancestry, another racialized group, illustrates a particularly complex set of affairs within a discourse that involves both the communities themselves and their representation within a wider Canadian context. Those identified as of "South Asian" ethnicity have roots not only in the Indian sub-continent but in nearly every region of the world, particularly in East Africa, the Pacific Islands and the Caribbean. Their ethnocultural diversity is at least as extensive as that of the European countries and is broken down according to complicated variations in cultural traditions, regional background, class, caste and religion. Indeed, such differences are not without expression in Canada. These potentially divisive factors are mediated, however, through the political means of the National Association of Canadians of Origin in India (NACOI). This organization is interesting, both because it has probably the most diverse constituency of any of the national ethnocultural associations in Canada and because it manages to prevail despite encompassing some of the most divisive issues of nationalism such as those presented, for example, by people of Tamil and Sikh origin.

The difficult process of ethnic definition was expressed fairly dramatically at a recent meeting of the Board of Presidents of the Canadian Ethnocultural Council (CEC).<sup>4</sup> Applications for membership in the CEC were heard from the Canadian branch of the World Sikh Organization and the National Indo-Canadian Council.<sup>5</sup> The two groups represent opposite points of the political spectrum within the community, espousing respectively a fundamentalist Sikh position and a distinctly anti-Sikh position. Both applications were opposed by NACOI, and subsequently denied, on the grounds that the applicants were already represented on the council by NACOI. It was further pointed out that the World Sikh Organization is an international religious organization, not a Canadian ethnocultural association.

The CEC is one of the major sites of struggle for ethnic identity in Canada. Founded in 1980 as an umbrella group representing the political interests of 38 national organizations and over 2,000 local and provincial associations, it is a product of multiculturalism policy. It is also one of the nation's most active and effective lobby groups. Its mandate is:

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...to secure equality of opportunity, rights and dignity for ethnocultural communities in Canada. The CEC membership works by sharing information so as to develop a consensus on issues of interest to its membership and by advocating for changes on behalf of ethnic and visible minority groups (from *Ethno Canada*, a semi-annual newsletter).

Some doubt the efficacy of the CEC because it receives a major portion of its funding from the Department of Multiculturalism (Lupul 1989). While its position is fundamentally in support of the principles of multiculturalism, however, it has consistently criticized the federal government for its failure to advance or take seriously those principles and it remains the most effective vehicle for politicizing the issue of ethnicity in Canada. Through its hierarchical national network it reaches to the grassroots to affect significantly the ways in which Canadian people negotiate and define their ethnicity. In so doing it acts out the peculiarly Canadian style of compromise and mediation in addressing (however ineffectively) issues of relations between state and civil society. It has, furthermore, been one of the most significant voices bearing directly upon the production of ethnocultural statistexts through its concerted efforts to convince Statistics Canada of the relationship between census data and its particular vision of ethnicity.

A final example addresses directly the production of statistexts and the complexity of the process through which their production is negotiated. At the same 2 June 1991 meeting of the CEC, which occurred just prior to the official 1991 national census-taking, a submission was made by the Canadian Hispanic Congress for support in its efforts to convince Statistics Canada that "Hispanic" should be one of the choices provided in Question 15 (the ethnicity question) of the census questionnaire. It is the position of the Canadian Hispanic Congress that Statistics Canada misrepresents "Hispanics" by undercounting them and, in not providing a specific designation using the word "Hispanic," encourages people to answer in ways that will obscure their Hispanic origin.

The political benefits of playing the numbers game are obvious: by securing its "representation" of a large proportion of the Canadian population, the Canadian Hispanic Congress extends its political power at the grassroots level, within the national network that includes the CEC and at the level of government relations where official representation takes place and where grants are awarded. At the present time, this organization has a particular stake in the immigration process because the demographic structure of its constituency is changing rapidly as a result of refugee immigration from Central and South America.

But the claims of the Canadian Hispanic Congress also bring to the fore all of the problems of ethnic definition and expose starkly the political dimensions of the process. In contrast to the many nationalist-based organizations such as the United Macedonian Association, the Canadian Hispanic Congress is internationalist in ideology. Its map of representation resembles the former Spanish colonial empire more closely than it does a map of ethnocultural tradition. The common



ties of the Spanish language and a shared political history mask the differences created by colonial interventions and regional disparities. What is significant in the Canadian context, however, is the extent to which the Canadian Hispanic Congress's vision of ethnicity constitutes a re-presentation of history in a form that fits in with the Canadian way of doing politics and, in the process, creates a new set of statistexts that reflect this political negotiation.

There are as many other examples as there are expressions of ethnocultural heritage in Canada and each presents complications that defy statistical representation. Two final points need to be made although the scope of this paper does not allow their elaboration. The first is that the scene of political negotiation in Canada usually involves a few individuals who have personal as well as group interests in mind. It would be impossible to understand completely the ways in which ethnocultural groups create identities and advance their interests without detailed analysis of the individuals involved, including the leaders, the dissenters and the brokers. Secondly, it will become more and more evident in Canada that ethnocultural politics are thoroughly gendered; and there will be more and more need to pay attention to the process by which gender is negotiated simultaneously with ethnicity and the two concepts are used to represent overlapping interests. With gender as with colour the question of who speaks for whom is of increasing relevance.

## **Conclusion**

Canadian ethnocultural statistexts result from processes of political representation, with all that that term implies, at a number of levels. They involve the negotiation of meaning from the local community to national and even international organizations and are significantly altered by the intervention of government and other institutions including academics. They are ideological creations that reflect not a functional definition of ethnicity but the political creation of meaning within a specific Canadian context. At the present time in Canadian history, they are especially conditioned by multiculturalism policy and by conflicting nationalistic and internationalistic perspectives. They are subject to constant change as a result of processes such as immigration, and in relation to the larger political agenda that includes constitutional reform and the negotiation of individual and group rights in line with the interests of groups defined by other than ethnocultural criteria.

This situation creates specific challenges for data gatherers faced with analytical categories that seem to defy logical classification or comparability. How do we justify "Hispanic" against "Mexican" against "Chicano"? "Indian" against "Sikh"? "Macedonian" against "Greek"? "Black" against "Afro-Canadian" against "Ethiopian" against "Eritrean"? The answers do not lie in providing more precise functional categories because the logic of such exercises defies the political process by which people come to think of themselves as "ethnic".



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There is no quick-fix solution to this problem and no encompassing theoretical structure that will provide a single more appropriate methodology. There is a number of practical and sensible steps that can be taken. One is to incorporate within the process of ethnic definition both perspectives from within the ethnocultural communities and analyses that expose the political interests generated therein. For, as the above examples show, simply letting ethnic groups "speak for themselves" is no guarantee of the production of uncontroversial categories.

Nor is the answer simply one of opening the census to a process of complete "self-identification" at the individual level, for such an approach naively ignores the political process by which ethnicity is constructed and also ignores the fact that researchers and statisticians subsequently categorize such identifications, in the process re-presenting ethnicity in yet another form. Literally hundreds of books and articles are published in Canada each year which do just that, based on aggregate data compiled from the Public Use Sample Tape that ignore or subvert the political discourse that conditions the final emergence of the statistext as public "fact". There is a need to be realistic, of course, about how much can be said without recourse to categories and the technical problems of sampling and statistical representation should not be discounted but technical sophistication can never obviate that fact that it is never beyond ideology.

Another partial solution is to make the results of the census available in more detail than is now found in published data. It is well past the time for cooperative efforts among researchers and data compilers to overcome the tendency toward aggregation that still dominates Canadian social scientists' treatment of ethnicity and that fails in general to address the political process of ethnic construction. Such cooperative efforts need to take account of the opposing tendencies between demographers, whose statistical work has generally been individually oriented and has downplayed contextual considerations, and historians and other ethnic studies researchers who emphasize context and group-oriented analyses but have had little faith or interest in statistics.

In formulating definitions of ethnicity, attention needs to be directed to the ways in which a number of variables, including place of birth, immigration data, religion, language, socio-economic status and place of residence, to name the more obvious, intersect in the creation of sub-group profiles that may conform to socio-political dimensions of ethnic identity. In this respect, there is a strong need for comparative work, dedicated to overcoming both the lumping tendencies of macro-level statistical research and particularizing tendencies of work on specific ethnic groups.

Also, in formulating definitions, there is a need to recognize that if no word is neutral, no statistical variable is neutral. The language of social science is a particular form of ideological re-presentation, all the more treacherous because it is also a reductionist format. In Canada and the United States, the fixations within the census process on issues of race and language reflect all too well the political issues that divide our society and underscore the need for statisticians to follow through on the social effects of linguistic representation.

The most important consideration, however, is still that of context. Ethnicity can be understood only as it is produced within a wider sphere of social construction. Ethnicity is not simply a social variable, however interrelated to other social variables, that can be interpreted unproblematically, no matter to what lengths we go to create statistexts that are accurate and sensitive to a range of social contingencies. Rather, ethnicity is itself a form of discourse through which the interests, norms, constraints and sanctions of society are mediated and through which the contours of the state/civil society relationship are drawn. This is a process infused with power and ideology. That fact will not go away but needs to be incorporated at every level within the process of statistextual representation.

### Notes

1. The literature on this issue is large and growing. Two major works are Marcus and Fischer (1986 and Clifford and Marcus 1986). For a review of recent controversies, see Sangren et al. 1991.
2. The term is attributed to Senator Yuzyk's first speech before the Senate on 3 May 1964 (see Kelner and Kallen 1974, 33).
3. This section of the paper is based on work done by Craig Forcese for his honours thesis. I am grateful to him for permission to use it.
4. This section is based on personal observation of the meeting held on 2 June 1991, as well as on the minutes of that meeting.
5. Application was also made by the United Macedonian Association of Canada. This application was vigorously opposed by representatives from the Hellenic Canadian Congress and turned down on the grounds that Macedonian Canadians are already represented by the Hellenic Canadian Congress.

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# **Focus for the Future**





# *Measuring Ethnicity in the Future: Population, Policies, Politics and Social Science Research*

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## **Introduction**

For North American statisticians, measuring ethnicity ought to be a matter of little debate. Ideally, the task should be one of assessing results in terms of the principles of survey research: the type of instrument used (face to face interview; self administered; phone interview); the format (open ended, recoded or a mixture of both); whether proxy answers are permitted; the method of data capture (key entered; automatic coding; imputation methods, if any); the rates of non-response and degree of population coverage. Even product-oriented tasks in which data are released to users would be dictated by statistical principles which emphasize preserving respondent confidentiality.

However, the reality of ethnic measurement strongly counters this ideal for at least two reasons. First, ethnicity is a slippery concept and a over-burdened term. It includes one or more of the following dimensions: ancestry, birthplace, race, religion, language and culture, and the term is fraught with ambiguity over the use of these dimensions to depict membership in a statistical category, or membership in a social group (Petersen 1980). Such properties by themselves do not negate the measurement of ethnicity – indeed these complexities suggest instead the need for careful conceptualizing and question design (for a study that did just that, see Waters 1990). But they become problematic when statistical agencies must make hard choices, both about a limited number of questions to be asked and the categories available when data are distributed and when users conceptually empower the resulting data.<sup>1</sup>

The second reason for gaps between the ideal world of measurement and reality is that in industrial democracies statistical agencies do not operate in a vacuum. Rather, they have diverse calls for data, must be attentive to public concerns and also must be players in an arena that consists of other government organizations. Thus, if principles of social science research guide the measurement of ethnicity, so too do the principles of law, politics and expediency (McKenney and Cresce 1992; Petersen 1987). For statistical agencies, how ethnicity is measured is neither accidental nor random but rather reflects past practices, responses to external lobbying and legislative requirements. Further, inputs themselves are not static in content. Rather as mirrors of societal change, they assure temporal variation in the questions which ethnic data must address and thus in how the measurement of ethnicity is approached and undertaken.

These considerations make it risky to predict the best way to measure ethnicity. At best we can be guided by the observation that to guess about the future we must understand not only contemporary ethnic issues but also be guided by the past (Yancey 1985). This exercise, however, is complicated by the fact that all nations have their own histories. As we have seen from the papers at this conference, not all countries measure ethnicity the same ways, collect data for the same reasons and use them to answer the same questions. The uniqueness and diversity of concerns defy prescribing a uniform set of questions on ethnicity applicable to all countries.

What then does the future of ethnic measurement portend for national statistical agencies? The glib answer is twofold. There will be a continuation of current attempts to produce data that are useful for demographic, social and political purposes and such endeavours will include altering old questions and devising new ones, using the criteria of sound survey research methodology. And, as the conference papers indicate, such alteration and innovation require grappling with dimensions of race and ancestry and with issues concerning ethnic categorization versus identity.

However, while we can look to the application of sound survey research as a guiding light, it is a beacon filtered and coloured through the prism of social issues and public policies. Thus, a more serious and complete answer to the question "what are the future approaches for measuring ethnicity" rests on understanding country-specific factors: the current measures of ethnicity in a country and the demographic, social and political bases for their existence. An analysis of these factors ultimately rests on ideologies of nationhood, nation-building agendas and the incorporation (or disavowal) of ethnicity into that agenda. As the historian William McNeill (1986) notes, issues of ethnicity cannot be disassociated from questions of who are we and what shall we become.

The remainder of this paper undertakes this exercise, using Canada as a case study. After an initial assessment of the current measures of ethnicity collected by Statistics Canada, I assess both the continued reliance on an ethnic origin question and recent initiatives for change. The historical legacy of regional and ethnic fragmentation was confronted in the 1950s and 1960s by deliberate governmental attempts to forge a pan-Canada identity. Both the legislation and consultative styles which developed proved to be important factors in the preservation of Canada's ethnic origin question in 1991 and the problems encountered with adding others. Thus, how to measure ethnicity in the future is likely to be influenced by demographic issues, equality issues, legislative requirements and court challenges as well as by the principles of "sound science."

### **Ethnic origin**

The 1991 Census of Canada asks respondents their ethnic origin. This question is considered to be the primary source of data on ethnic groups, although additional questions on registered



Indian status, mother tongue language, religion and birthplace also produce ethnic-relevant data. There is no question on "race."<sup>2</sup>

The ethnic origin question asked in the 1991 Census of Canada epitomizes many of the reliability- and validity-based criticisms which plague the more general measurement of ethnicity. Ancestry measures are increasingly problematic in societies characterized by pluralistic or assimilationist ideologies and where previous European streams of migration are into their second, third and higher generations. For these groups, multiple responses are to be expected as a result of intermarriage. Considerable ethnic flux also exists.<sup>3</sup> However, for more recently arrived groups, questions on ancestral origin elicit responses which more closely correspond both to birthplace and to identity formed not only from past personal experience but also from how the receiving society defines, treats and incorporates newcomers.

The end result is ethnic origin questions such as that asked by the 1991 Canadian Census which combine responses based on ancestral origins with those based on ethnic identity. What constitutes "identity", in turn, is unclear for the term can represent various dimensions and intensities of "belonging-ness" (nominal, group or collectivity). As well, accuracy of response is suspect, given the problem of recall and slippage. Indeed, the ambiguity in what is being captured by an ethnic origin question underlay its omission in the Australian 1991 Census, given that country's tradition of relying on birthplace of parents and respondents as markers of "ethnicity" (Cornish 1992).

### **The persistence of ethnic origins**

Given these known properties of ethnic origin questions, an interesting question is why does ethnic ancestry remain the major instrument for measuring ethnicity in Canada? Part of the answer lies in the weight of past practices. Faced with maintaining comparability over time, statistical agencies are understandably reluctant to discard questions unless there are compensating gains. But organizational tradition is not the sole answer – indeed the move away from paternal ancestry and the recent acceptability of multiple responses have ruptured the trend line (see White, Badets and Renaud 1992).

In part, the reason why the ethnic origin question remains the major measure of ethnicity in the Canadian census reflects its past and present uses for governments and groups. Well into the middle of the twentieth century, ethnic data served as a marker of assimilation in a country characterized by diverse peoples spread over vast space. Canada's history of colonizing meant the domination of the first nations of aboriginal peoples by French and British cultures and people. Founded in war, the fusion of British and French societies into one nation in turn sustained ethnic-based inequalities which persist into the late twentieth century. Scholars observed that even within Francophone Canada, Anglophones occupied elite economic positions (Hughes 1943; Porter 1965), had higher rates of intergenerational social mobility (De Jocas and

Rocher 1957) and dominated the national political agenda through the 1950s (Clarkson and McCall 1990).

The dominance of British origin groups in Canada's economic, political and social life also shaped perceptions and policies of how newcomers were to be incorporated. Certainly through the first half of the twentieth century the dominant model applied to immigrants was that of assimilation. For almost two centuries, with the cessation of French immigration in the 1700s and increased movement from Ireland, the British Isles and the United States in the 1800s, international migration reinforced British domination. The Immigration Acts of 1910, 1927 and 1952 continued Canada's exclusion of groups deemed undesirable on ethnic/racial criteria and continued to favour the migration of people from the British Isles, North Europe and – if all else failed – other European areas (Harney 1988). In fact, during the late 1800s and through the 1900s, migration from Europe ensured substantial ethnic diversification. However, contrary to popular beliefs which proclaim Canada as historically distinct from the United States, the prevailing model remained that of assimilation to a British ethnic prototype (Breton 1988; Harney 1988).

In such circumstances, data on ethnic groups were indicators of the size of the groups and of differences from the British reference population. To paraphrase Petersen (1987, 200), ethnic data offered the opportunity for the native stock to check on whether immigrants were being assimilated on schedule, to see if the Galicians and stalwart peasants in sheepskin coats were indeed becoming Anglicised (Sifton 1906).

Recruiting "British stock" to settle and unify Canadian vast regions was an ideal that was increasingly unachieved during the twentieth century. As the century developed, racist pronouncements became less overt. Allusions to Canada's founding nations were reformulated as Canada's founding peoples (first two, then three as the First Nation status of Canada's aboriginal peoples was gradually acknowledged). Acceptance weakened for the pronounced racist overtones of Canada's immigration policy, best articulated by Prime Minister MacKenzie King's 1947 announcement that Canada did not wish, as a result of mass immigration, to make fundamental alteration in the character of the Canadian population. In 1962 and in 1967, changes in Canadian immigration regulations opened the doors to non-European groups. These changes, later embodied in the Immigration Act (1976), replaced national origins criteria for admission with standards emphasizing family reunification and labour market contribution. Groups which previously could not immigrate to Canada because they were not from designated European countries are now admitted after meeting family reunification, labour market or refugee criteria. Today, close to three quarters of immigrants come from regions other than Europe (including Ireland and the United Kingdom) and the United States (Boyd and Taylor 1990).



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Harney (1988) argues that the resultant ethnic diversity belied the old images of Canadian society and thus fuelled the search for a principle of collective national identity in the 1980s. However, the need to unify a country with major regional and linguistic/ethnic cleavages had been recognized much earlier by politicians. Starting in the late 1950s, under Diefenbaker, and continued through the Liberal government of the 1970s were a series of policies and actions "... which deliberately and directly appealed to Canadians as Canadian regardless of where they lived or what language they spoke" (Smith 1989).

The development of Canada's multiculturalism policy can be interpreted as part of the effort of the Canadian state to forge a pan-Canadian identity out of vast regions and diverse ethnic groups. The original impetus for such a policy came from the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism which was intended to review the status of the British and the French "founding peoples." However, other groups stressed in public hearings that their status must be recognized as well (Sheridan 1991). Established in 1971, the policy has gone through several evolutions. From the viewpoint of collecting ethnic data, the most significant events have been legislative. In April 1982 the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms was pronounced by Queen Elizabeth II. Three sections gave important guarantees to ethnic groups:

15(1) Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

15(2) Subsection (1) does not preclude any law, program or activity that has as its object the amelioration of conditions of disadvantaged individuals or groups including those that are distinguished because of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

27. This Charter shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians.

During the 1980s and early 1990s, additional significant legislative developments included the creation of a Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship. Major programs are those of: 1) race relations and cross-cultural understanding; 2) heritage cultures and languages; and 3) community support and participation.

Canada's past and present multicultural policy has been criticized as supporting the symbolic aspects of multiculturalism, although it appears to be moving more into the realm of race relations (Phillips 1991; Stasiulis 1988). However, for many ethnic groups it represents a source of funds and it has been instrumental in furthering the consultative style which is by now so characteristic of Canadian public life. Ethnic groups today have well developed expectations of



engaging in public discourse with government agencies and of having a modicum of success in having those views acknowledged (see Phillips 1991 for general discussion on the consultative process which characterize government-interest group relations). These two features are important factors in attempts to preserve or alter the ethnic data collected by Statistics Canada. Questions which diminish "head counts" have the potential to diminish claims for special interest funding. This creates incentives for keeping questions such as ethnic origins in which all respondents have an ethnic origin and where "Canadian" as a response is not encouraged (but see: Pryor et al. 1992). Moreover, the consultative process has created a readiness among groups to express views and lobby for their interests.<sup>4</sup> Government bureaucracies which serve ethnic constituents likewise may be predisposed to favour questions which do not diminish "head counts." Such support not only suggests successful client representation but also enhances organizational claims for funding from a limited public purse.

### **Factors for change: Race<sup>5</sup>**

Changing demographics and legislative action can also provide the basis for changing ethnic measures. Canada's altered immigration flow and ethnic group mobilization of aboriginal peoples (and to a lesser extent the Black population) provide demographic rationales for measures of race. However, the *prima facie* reason for asking a question on race in Canada arises from the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms discussed above.

Section 15(2) removed obstacles to the subsequent passage of employment equity legislation in 1986. The foundation document of Canadian employment equity policy was the 1984 report of the Royal Commission on Equality in Employment (Abella 1984). This report corroborated the changed approaches to stratification in which issues of differences were replaced in the 1960s by preoccupations with equality of opportunity. More recently analysts have begun to emphasize the covert sources of disadvantage produced as a result of traditional hiring and promotional practices (see Agocs and Boyd 1993 for a fuller discussion of these changing shifts in paradigms and the policy implications).

Seeking to redress the effects of systemic discrimination, the Report of the Royal Commission on Equality in Employment recommended that the Government of Canada pass legislation making employment equity mandatory for employers in the public and private sectors; it also recommended that there be effective arrangements to monitor compliance and impose sanctions for failure to demonstrate good faith efforts to attain employment equity goals. In response, the Conservative government introduced two initiatives in 1986: the Employment Equity Act and the Federal Contractors Program.<sup>6</sup> Approximately 370 employers and 632,000 employees are covered under the Employment Equity Act and another 1350 employers and over a million employees are affected by the Federal Contractors Program (Employment and Immigration Canada 1990, 2, 17). In both, visible minorities are a designated group as are aboriginal peoples.<sup>7</sup>

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Within the context of the Act, visible minorities are defined as "... persons other than aboriginal persons, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-White in colour and who so identify themselves to an employer or agree to be so identified by an employer for the purposes of the Employment Equality Act" (Employment and Immigration Canada 1989, 25). The underlying concept is race. The method of data collection is respondent self-identification with the following categories: Blacks, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino, Indo-Pakistani, West Indian and Arab, Southeast Asian and Other, which includes Latin Americans, Indonesian or Pacific Islanders (Employment and Immigration Canada 1986: Technical Reference Paper No. 3:3)

Under the Employment Equity Act, firms are required to submit annual reports indicating their employment profiles in regard to the four target groups which, in addition to visible minorities and aboriginal peoples, include women and the disabled. Compliance with the Act involves comparisons with a reference population, usually that of the local labour market. Given this methodology and the implied data requirements, census data represent a potentially important source of such geographically defined information.

These legislative requirements have forced Statistics Canada to collect data on a new construct. The methodology developed for the 1981, 1986 and 1991 Census data determines visible minority status according to responses to census questions on birthplace, ethnic origin, mother tongue and religion (the latter was not collected in the 1986 Census). This procedure was developed in collaboration with the Inter-[government] Department Committee on Employment Equity. The reliance on existing census questions means that self-identification plays no role in defining "visible minority," unlike the methodology used to collect data at the firm level.

Conscious of the need for data on this new concept<sup>8</sup>, Statistics Canada sought to determine if a race question should be part of the 1991 Census. The inquiry took several forms. Advisory bodies to Statistics Canada, such as the National Statistics Council and the Advisory Committees on Demography and the Advisory Committee on Social Conditions, were asked to ponder the inclusion of a question on race and its wording (Petrie 1989). In preparation for the 1991 Census, respondents to various surveys and pretests were asked a question on race and qualitative assessments by focus groups to these questions were also undertaken (Breedon 1988; White 1988). The 1986 Census overcoverage study (fielded six weeks after the 1986 Census) asked respondents, "Do you consider yourself to belong to Canada's visible or racial minority population?" Analysis of responses indicated a number of difficulties including under-identification and considerable confusion as to what was meant by the term visible minority, even though the term "racial" minority was also part of the question (White 1988). The MT-2 (Modular Test-2), undertaken in 1988 in anticipation of the 1991 Census, departed from the perceptual wording of the overcoverage study and asked respondents to indicate which (largely precoded) category(ies) best described their race or colour. There was a high level of non-response to this question (11 percent) and substantial discrepancy between responses to questions on race and those on ancestry and ethnic identity (White 1988). Focus tests revealed



considerable concerns about the intent of the question on race and many participants found it offensive (Breedon 1988). The question on race was repeated in the two National Census Tests (I and II), but by then representations against its inclusion were growing and it was clear that no consensus existed on category selection. Respondent confusion, hostility and non-response are, of course, mortal sins in survey research and a 1991 Census question on race subsequently died.

Although the criteria of sound survey research weighed heavily in the demise of a race question, these ultimately reflect only the most immediate or "first order" reasons for the absence of a census question on race. Technical criteria are tools for assessing public reaction to questions – reactions which, in turn, reflect existing ideologies of group incorporation and past and present policies. The term "race" has been absent in public discourse since the 1950s (see note 7). Although it now is being used in reference to "Race Relations" programs, the term was – and remains – avoided as an explicit part of Canada's agenda for national unity. The nuances instead are those of multiculturalism and visible minorities. These terms help avoid the implicit pejorative and/or exclusionary images of the "other" that all too frequently become associated with racial categories as a result of racialisation (Miles 1989). But, as a consequence, the larger Canadian public at best is unfamiliar with the idea of racial identification/labelling and at worst mistrustful of its introduction.

### **Factors for change: Canadian identity and parental birthplace**

A question on cultural identity fared no better than race in meeting social survey criteria for inclusion in the 1991 Census. Census consultations revealed support for distinguishing between ethnic ancestry and ethnic identity. Subsequently, several tests included a question which asked respondents to indicate which ethnic groups they considered themselves to now belong. Focus groups indicated considerable support for including this question as the only ethnicity question on the census (Breedon 1988). However, in the final census pretest (National Census Test-2), which was equivalent to a pre-opening night dress rehearsal, non-response was exceptionally high and the question was dropped (White 1992).

A related issue was whether to include "Canadian" as either a precoded category or a designated option on the list of examples. This was tested in the question on ethnic identity as well as in the ethnic origins question traditionally asked in the census. An exhaustive review of the results noted the volatility in the percentages responding "Canadian," suggesting "... that responses are very dependent on the design and structure of the inquiry and the power of suggestion of Canadian or other specific responses." Once again, the principles of sound survey research were in danger of violation.

But it would be facile to suggest that principles of survey research were the only considerations. At least two other factors created the stage upon which technical results had to be gauged. One



was the system of accountability in which the final census content is approved, debated or turned back in the federal Cabinet. Members of Cabinet are not immune to constituent intervention. Indeed Brooks (1989) argues that the model of executive federalism in Canada means that lobbyists are prone to ignore government bureaucracy and to target their efforts at politicians. For government bureaucracies seeking approval of their proposals the risk is very real that Cabinet approval might not be forthcoming if questions are weak on technical criteria and public reaction is negative and vocal. This general concern had specific meaning for Statistics Canada as an organization. The cancellation of the quinquennial census in 1986 (which was reinstated only after considerable individual and private sector protest) created enormous sensitivity to the risk that a question which could not be "scientifically" defended could weaken the image and subsequent requests of the statistical agency. Such possibilities reinforced what tends to be a conservative position when benchmark criteria of social survey research exist and are applied.

A second factor was ethnic mobilization against the question on identity. The impetus within Statistics Canada for asking a question about identity reflected feedback from consultations which emphasized the artificiality and ambiguity about ethnic ancestry as a measure of "ethnicity" and which stressed that many respondents considered themselves as Canadian. But asking about identity can elevate questions about the reliability and validity of ethnic origins into public discussion and into the policy arena. Such elevation potentially could mean the selection of other criteria of ethnicity or a weakening of the claims of ethnically mobilized groups for access to government programs and funds.

As an umbrella group for a number of ethnic-based associations, the Canadian Ethnocultural Council was active in voicing its preference for the ethnic origin question and the exclusion of the ethnic identity question. Meetings occurred with officials at Statistics Canada and with Secretary of State, Multiculturalism (the earlier organization form of the new Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship). Public representations also were made to the House of Parliament Standing Committee on Labour, Employment and Immigration (December 19, 1989). In combination with the technical problems of non-response and the need to gain Cabinet approval for the entire census questionnaire, these views assured that a question on ethnic identity was absent on the 1991 Census and that the ethnic origin question remained (albeit with minor modifications).

As Choldin (1986) observes with reference to the Hispanic question in the U.S. census, ethnic-based public pressure is a force to be reckoned with when choosing questions. But the absence of pressure also is important. In addition to ethnic origin and ethnic identity questions, asking birthplace of parents was proposed and tested for possible inclusion in the 1991 Canadian Census. However, aside from the Advisory Committees on Demography and the Advisory Committee on Social Conditions, these questions were given little attention by groups who were otherwise focused on ethnic origin and ethnic identity questions. Given the absence of a

powerful constituency in the public arena, the questions on birthplace of parents were deemed to have limited support and they were not included in the 1991 Census.

### **Gazing into the crystal ball**

The history of question selection on the 1991 Census of Canada indicates the superficiality of discussions which emphasize the role of technical considerations and which neglect factors of population change, politics and policies. Although principles of social survey research are essential in the undertaking of a national census, they are necessary but not sufficient explanations for the presence of some questions and the absence of others. The final 1991 Census questionnaire reflects not only technical considerations but also inputs from ethnic groups, governmental agencies servicing those groups, Statistics Canada advisory groups and media coverage. The data requirements of legislation and the dependency of the statistical agency, as a government bureaucracy, upon Cabinet approval also are factors shaping the final census questionnaire.

The tapestry created by the interweaving of technical, legal, social and political factors makes predicting the focus for the future a soothsayer's task. However, these factors do point us in the direction of possible events which will be the subject of scrutiny in the year 2001.<sup>9</sup> First, demographic change provides an impetus for the addition of questions. Increased migration from Latin America is likely to occur in the future, if for no other reason than the Canadian-Mexican-U.S.A. trade agreement which will set in motion flows of information, goods and people. Migration systems in particular have their own dynamic in which initial flows have a capacity to be self-sustaining long after the original economic or social bridges have been dismantled. An enlarged Hispanic population, particularly one with ties to the Hispanic population in the United States, may well bring with it or gradually acquire claims for its own special enumeration.

The continued migration of people from countries other than the United States, the United Kingdom and Europe also raises the issues of their socio-economic well-being and equality. These groups also are the parents of subsequent generations who will be Canadian-born but who also may be visible in terms of colour or race. Inequality issues, couched in the language of the underclass, may well motivate a renewed interest in asking questions about the birthplace of parents.

Legislation also will maintain its own special needs for data. Continuation of Canada's employment equity policy will sustain the demand for data on "visible" minorities. However, the way in which such data are produced could conceivably be influenced by judicial decisions. Unlike the United States, Canada does not have a legal system that permits extensive class action suits. However, legislation is changing and class action suits may be more likely in the future.



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If litigation challenges the way in which census data are used to construct benchmark figures on visible minorities, there may well be renewed attempts to obtain data on race.

Finally, the issues of ethnic origin and ethnic identity will remain and they will continue to affect the measurement of ethnicity. Canada's multiculturalism policy assures that ethnic groups have a vested interest in monitoring and influencing how ethnic counts are obtained. At the same time, there will be continuing debates over identity versus origin and the inclusion/non-inclusion of "Canadian" as a response category. If anything, such debates could well intensify as European origin groups become even more temporally distant from their origins.

In sum, measuring ethnicity is far from simple and anticipating its future forms is less than clear. However, inevitably the decisions to be made will be shaped by technical considerations but also by the three "P's" of population change, politics and policies. Deliberations over what questions to ask and how will be incomplete if we fail to assess the broader social and economic climate and the feasibility of getting such questions on the census questionnaire.

### **Notes**

1. This all too frequently happens when an ancestry origin question is used as a measure of group identity and belonging. Research on minority fertility is an example. The theory itself has several assumptions: 1) that individuals have strong social ties to a group; 2) that they adhere to its norms; 3) that groups have a perception of being a minority; and 4) that pronatalist ideologies are part of the group culture. However, when testing the minority group hypothesis, North American researchers found it hard to resist using ethnic categories which are readily available but whose match with the theoretical assumptions is questionable.
2. The question wording is: "To which ethnic or cultural group(s) did this person's ancestors belong?" [mark or specify as many as possible].
3. By "ethnic flux" I am referring to two phenomena extensively studied: first, the tendency not to give an ancestral origin (e.g. the unhyphenated American discussed by Lieberman, 1985, and Lieberman and Waters, 1988); and second, the variability in response. This latter phenomenon is closely linked to the use of ethnicity as a means of maintaining individualism while enjoying the option of a symbolic link with a collectivity. As shown in the research by Alba (1990) and Waters (1990), this "symbolic identity" is highly situational and involves a "choice" among a range of possible ethnic responses.
4. This is by no means restricted to ethnic-based groups. Women, immigrant groups, aboriginal peoples and unions, among others, have all been participants in the



consultative style that exists between the Canadian government bureaucracy and the broader public it serves.

5. Parts of this section appear in Agcos and Boyd (1993) and are reproduced with permission of the authors.
6. The Employment Equity Act covers employers under federal jurisdiction including federal crown corporations, banks and firms in interprovincial transport and communications. The legislated employment equity program established by the Act requires these firms to report annual statistics on the occupational distribution and salary levels of their employees, as well as counts of hires, promotions and terminations for women, racial minorities, aboriginal people and people with disabilities. Employment and Immigration Canada summarizes these data and makes them available to the public (Employment and Immigration Canada, 1988, 1989, 1990). The Act imposes fines on employers who do not report the required data but not sanctions for failing to implement employment equity measures.

The Federal Contractors Program (FC) applies to employers who sell goods or services worth \$200,000 or more to the federal government and who have at least 100 employees. These employers are not required to report workforce data but they must implement employment equity programs which include data collection and analysis, review of employment systems to eliminate barriers, setting of goals and timetables for the representation of the four groups, adopting special measures and accommodating diversity. Employers are selected at random for compliance reviews and an employer who does not pass the review can be barred from bidding on government contracts in the future.

7. Aboriginal peoples are considered a separate category under the Employment Equity Act. They have argued that they represent a distinct group which should be treated separate from other groups because of their unique position as Canada's First Nations (which entails related issues of sovereignty and self-government). They are a group that has successfully mobilized itself, despite diversity within, to become an important participant in national politics and issues of national unity (see: Hakes and Devine, 1991).
8. The choice of terminology regarding "visible minority" is itself noteworthy. The term came into use in the early 1980s. Given alternatives such as "race" (United States) and "ethnic minorities" (United Kingdom, Germany, Netherlands), an interesting question is why the construction of a new nuance. While part of the answer lies in the identity politics already practised by the aboriginal people, part of the answer may also lie in the studied avoidance of the term "race" since the 1950s. Founding "races" and the general use of the term to refer to groups such as the Irish were once part of the popular language, only gradually giving way to "founding peoples" as blatantly racist terminology

became less acceptable (see Harney, 1988:55) and was shunned in the aftermath of "racial" policies in Nazi Germany. Critics charge that this avoidance and the accompanied nuancing of "visible minorities" also avoids the issue of racism (see Stasiulis, 1991).

9. Although Canada has fielded a census every five years, major reassessing and revamping of questions occurs only with respect to the decennial census.

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# *How to Measure Ethnicity: An Immodest Proposal*

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A standard theory of measurement is that practice makes perfect or at least that standardized measurement systems tend to reduce error. This policy is one of the linchpins of social statistics gathered in national systems of population censuses and surveys. While experienced users of social statistics are acutely aware of the remaining errors in the data, there is no doubt that the standardization of questions and survey methods, the professional training of interviewers and coders and careful evaluation of all phases of survey and census procedures have improved the quality of data available to social science and policy making.

For the area of ethnicity, however, statisticians and others concerned with data collection have begun to doubt the conventional strategies of measurement. Attempts to improve the measurement of ethnic categories in censuses and surveys have been frustrated by the seeming inability of respondents to give consistent or meaningful responses. The examples of "contradictory" responses for measures of race, ethnicity, ancestry, language, birthplace and similar questions are familiar to every statistician and scholar (Levin and Farley 1982; Lieberman and Santi 1985, Khoo 1991). For the censuses of the United States, the addition of new questions on Hispanic origin and ancestry has created more data but has given rise to even more uncertainty over the ethnic composition of the population and raised new questions on the meaning of ethnic identity (Farley 1991).

For statisticians and researchers who rely on hard statistical data, the mushy data on ethnicity have been the source of great consternation. The first reaction is to fix the data by measuring errors (inconsistent responses) and making appropriate adjustments and then to create better questions that elicit "truer" or more consistent responses. The problem is that there is no one method to establish validity of responses. Is the true number of American Indians (native Americans) best measured by those who claim American Indian identity on the race question or those who report American Indian ancestry (Snipp 1989, 47-61)? It is possible to "explain" the differences in response to such questions (perhaps the race question best identifies those with full or almost full American Indian ancestry, while the ancestry question also includes those with partial American Indian ancestry) but it is unlikely that all persons weighed "objective" criteria in the same way or even that individuals report their own ethnicity consistently in different data sources. Probing surveys of ethnic identity and related attitudes and behavior have found only weak ethnic attachments for the majority of Americans (Alba 1990). Waters (1990) reports that many White Americans choose their ethnicity among a variety of options for quite idiosyncratic reasons.

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Because of the lack of "objectivity" of ethnicity, another common reaction of statisticians is to simply claim that reliable data cannot be measured on the topic of ethnicity. There are many important questions that surveys and censuses measure poorly and perhaps ethnicity is one of them. The problem is that the public and policy makers do not accept this option. In many if not all societies, ethnicity appears to be relatively unambiguous with numerous physical and cultural attributes differentiating the population. For individuals who are sure of their own ethnicity and that of others, the ambiguity of ethnicity seems to be a minor problem. Moreover, in many societies, public policies are formulated on the basis of the size and composition of ethnic communities. With considerable budgetary and political factors hanging in the balance, decision makers are reluctant to be told that it is impossible to measure ethnicity.

The motivation for this conference and of my paper is to rethink the concept of ethnicity in hopes of designing improved strategies of measurement. I begin with an historical review of the concept of ethnicity and then review the problems of reliable measurement. The final section of the paper presents some recommendations for a more consistent approach to measure ethnicity in censuses and surveys.

### **The Content of Ethnicity**

What is ethnicity? The fact that there is no simple answer to this question illustrates the depth of the problem before us (Glazer and Moynihan 1975; Petersen, Novak, and Gleason 1982). The question of deciding who is a Jew has sharply divided religious leaders, public officials and scholars in Israel for many years. In some societies, the question of whether a specific person is a member of a particular ethnic community has become a matter for judges and juries to decide. While it might seem that ethnic identity should be entirely a personal matter, the issue of classification can become contentious if there are state-sponsored entitlements such as scholarships or employment that are available to some groups and not others. The same problem arises when discriminators are trying to figure out who should be barred from a country club, a fraternity or employment. In many cases, elaborate investigations usually produce contradictory evidence, arguments are made on the basis of hair-splitting logic, and ad hoc judgments prevail.

In Malaysia, the constitution has codified the definition of ethnicity. According to the constitution, a Malay (the indigenous population of the country) is a person who professes the Muslim religion, habitually speaks the Malay language, conforms to the Malay custom and was born in the country before Independence (or is the issue of such a person). While such a formal definition may seem to be the ultimate step in maintaining rigid ethnic divisions, the reality is much more fuzzy. The authoritative legal text on the Malaysian constitution written by the former Lord President (Chief Justice) of the Federal Court writes that to be a Malay for the purpose of the constitution you need not be of Malay ethnic origin (Suffian bin Hashim 1976, 291). Suffian explicitly acknowledges that acculturation could be the basis of becoming a



Malay. Indeed, this is consistent with the traditional definition that conversion to Islam was all that was necessary to become accepted as part of the Malay community.

### **The Assumption of Mutually Exclusive Ethnic Groups**

The standard assumption of ethnicity is that there are visible differences among populations, defined in terms of phenotype or culture, that can be used to identify all individuals into a finite number of mutually exclusive ethnic groups. Ethnic differences are generally assumed to have arisen in prehistorical times when geographical isolation across many generations allowed for natural variations to develop. There are, however, several flaws to this argument.

Although geographical isolation in prehistory did lead to extensive physical and cultural variations, patterns of long distance migration meant that there were also opportunities for contact and intermarriage among different populations (Davis 1974). The result is that present-day populations that claim a distinct identity and ancestry may well be hybrid populations. For some populations that originated in the modern era (e.g., the English and many New World populations) the fusion of different physical and cultural stocks is well known but similar processes may have occurred in prehistory for many (most) other groups. Physical anthropologists have concluded that there is only a modest degree of genetic variability (relative to total variability) between populations (Chakraborty 1986, 35; Polednak 1989, 32).

Over the last few hundred years, even as ethnic divisions were becoming synonymous with the identity of modern states and caste-like "race relations" were being constructed on a world scale, there has been widespread ethnic blending (Hirschman 1991). By ethnic blending, I refer to inter-ethnic unions (interbreeding) and shifts in ethnic affiliation. In general, however, much of the evidence of ethnic blending is obscured because history is selectively revised to fit present day perceptions. The contemporary presence of states with a core ethnic community is taken as evidence for the historical origins and continuity of the ethnic group. Even most minority groups typically claim historical continuity as endogamous communities.

There is considerable evidence, however, that most ethnic communities are either amalgams of different peoples or have absorbed significant numbers of other groups through conquest, the expansion of national boundaries and acculturation. The creation of slave societies in the New World and other long-distance labor migration systems over the last 500 years have created some of the most obvious examples of blended populations. Although there are tremendous variations across countries in South America, North America and the Caribbean, there has been widespread admixtures of Native American, African and European populations throughout the New World. National systems of ethnic divisions and classification schemes seem more related to political history than to ancestry or cultural divisions (Harris 1964; Van den Berghe 1967).

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Numerous examples of blended populations can be found any place on the globe. The creation of the modern French and Italian nations are examples of how language acquisition and national identity can change within a few generations. In mainland Southeast Asia, I have argued that the cultural core of the Vietnamese, Thai and Burmese populations has grown through successive waves of absorption of different ethnic-linguistic groups (Hirschman 1991). The construction of Han identity in modern China may have similarly been an historical product of the large-scale cultural absorption of disparate ethnic groups.

### **The Problem of Permeable Boundaries**

A common belief is that the major problem of consistent ethnic measurement is the classification of peoples on the margins, e.g., the children of mixed marriages, individuals with characteristics of different groups or people who claim to have no ethnic identity. In many countries, the number of inconsistent cases is generally small and thought to be of recent origin, so the hope has been to resolve "problem cases" with ad hoc "rules of thumb". For example, a person of mixed ancestry could be classified according to the ethnicity of his father (or mother) or according to his primary ethnic identity or even coded with multiple ethnic affiliations. The hope is to maintain the objective basis of ethnicity but with a small degree of reliance on subjective criteria for those at the margins.

The preceding review, however, raises serious doubts that any assumptions for an objective base of ethnic identity can be justified. While the number of marginal cases may be a small fraction of cases at any one moment (or can be made small by framing broader categories), the reality is that many individuals in most societies could be classified in multiple categories if additional criteria were used or if respondents had complete information on their ancestry. The contemporary evidence of permeable boundaries reflects only the ambiguity based on the most recent generations. A historical view yields a kaleidoscope of shifting ethnic affiliations that have varied considerably in both premodern and modern times. Moreover, there is a fair degree of ethnographic evidence that many individuals may have multiple ethnic identities that are "put on" according to the situation or context (Leach 1954; Lehman 1967; Nagata 1974).

### **The Importance of Ethnicity**

If the previous account is only partially true, then there is little objective basis for the ethnic classifications used in most societies. Moreover, there is a significant degree of unavoidable inconsistency in the measurement of individual ethnic affiliation. This interpretation is consistent with the evidence that variations in the format of questions on ethnicity (open versus closed ended) and variations in the number of categories listed as choices or examples elicit such different responses (Pryor et al. 1992).



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Intuitively, the ambiguity of ethnicity classifications would seem to minimize the importance of ethnicity in the modern world. Yet exactly the opposite conclusion seems to be evident from even a casual reading of twentieth-century history and contemporary current events. The ideological prop for the colonial rule throughout much of Asia and Africa for the first half of the century was largely a racial construction. The apartheid structure of modern South Africa, Jim Crow in the United States, and Nazi Germany are only the most odious examples of the widespread racism that held sway throughout the Western world for much of this century. And even if one might claim that these practices are losing ground, it is clear that the ethnic passions still dominate political life in Northern Ireland, the former Yugoslavia and other parts of eastern Europe. Even without violence, ethnic tension is probably the central political issue in the United States, Canada, India, Malaysia and many other societies around the globe.

The reconciliation between ethnicity as the defining issue in social life and ethnicity as a concept so ambiguous that it is difficult to measure seems to be an impossible task. I believe that the key to the problem is the distinction between the study of long-term social dynamics and short-term political struggles. Over the long term there is a fair degree of mobility across ethnic divisions and even wholesale changes in the structure of ethnic classifications. The criteria used to create ethnic divisions are largely arbitrary and many of them can be manipulated by motivated individuals. Even for the ethnic characteristics that are inherited there is a moderate degree of variation that makes many individuals difficult to classify unambiguously. In the short run, ethnic divisions in many societies are strongly correlated with social, economic and political status. State policies are often shaped by groups that wish to reinforce the advantages of their own group and/or maintain the subordination of other groups. Not too surprisingly, ethnic groups, like families, often discriminate in favor of their own. These practices by states, families and individuals are what fuels the fires of ethnic antagonisms and makes ethnic disputes among the most volatile of social problems.

An analogy can be made between class relations and ethnic relations. Over time, especially over generations, there can be a fair degree of social mobility and even realignment of the class structure. But these long-term processes do not preclude strong class antagonisms resulting from the breakdown of patron-client structures, industrial strikes, state policies or other political and economic events. A high degree of social mobility probably tempers class antagonisms because family relationships can cross-cut class divisions. The same principle probably holds for ethnic relations but we really do not know the parameters of such relationships. The key conclusion is that contemporary ethnic passions and conflicts do not inevitably mean that there has been historical constancy of ethnic definitions or boundaries.

### **The Creation of Ethnic Classifications**

Definitions of ethnic groups might be illustrated with an analogy to the scope of traditional polities. In past times, empires and other political units had a clear center and heartland but



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only vague and shifting frontiers. As power waxed, more people and territory were included under the sway of the central state. At other times, those in the outlying provinces had only loose connections to the traditional center and may feel compelled to re-identify with expanding political units from other areas. In an analogous fashion, definitions of ethnic groups are likely to describe the physical and cultural features of the core constituencies but may not accurately fit those at the margins or boundaries.

This lack of clear boundaries makes it very difficult to develop consistent measurements of ethnic groups. Any definition of an ethnic group will capture the core community but the inclusion of those at the boundaries will depend on the nature of the question and the alternative choices. The standard practice for the measurement of ethnicity in censuses and surveys, as with most other social categories, is to follow precedent. The designers of census and survey questionnaires examine earlier classification schemes and typically make incremental adjustments from the prevailing standards. Continuity of measurement is highly valued because it allows for systematic comparisons across time. Continuity also reinforces beliefs that social measurements reflect real distinctions.

The "race" question has been part of the censuses of the United States for 200 years. The categories have changed and clearly the contemporary understanding of race is different than what it once was. It is difficult to provide a convincing conceptual justification for the current race question beyond the fact that it provides comparability with past measures (Liebersohn and Waters 1988, 15). The question may have other advantages such as a mutually exclusive set of categories but these are independent of its conceptual base.

The idea of ethnic classifications as a set of arbitrary, but not accidental, categories is reinforced by studies of the historical evolution of ethnic classifications in the censuses of Hawaii (Petersen 1969) and Malaysia (Hirschman 1987). In Hawaii, Petersen (1969) found that changes in census ethnic classifications were more related to political factors than to demographic considerations. The position of an ethnic community in the local power or prestige structure was much more important than its population size in determining the timing of inclusion as an ethnic category in the census. Over time one could read the changing political dynamics of Hawaii from changes in census classifications.

In my analysis of the evolution of the measurement of ethnicity in Malaysia from the first census of the Straits Settlements in 1871 through the colonial era and the postindependence period, the impact of political and ideological factors was dominant. In the earliest classifications, categories were listed alphabetically and referred to as nationalities. By the turn of the century, the categories were termed as races and there were many signs that the Social Darwinian conception of races had taken hold (Hirschman 1986). Europeans were always listed at the top of every table and the classification of local ethnic groups reflected European racial thinking.

As political independence approached, there were changes in the composition and order of census ethnic classifications.

In general I conclude that official ethnic classifications tell as much about the society in question and its ethnic political balance in particular than the physical or cultural distinctions among peoples. In any multiethnic society there are a variety of alternative classifications that can be used to classify human ethnic diversity. Different measurement strategies produce different and often inconsistent results. Since following precedent is not an unbiased strategy and there is no "truth" or validity check, it is not surprising that statisticians are turning to sociologists and anthropologists for advice.

### **How to Measure Ethnicity Better**

After painting this rather bleak picture of the problems of measuring ethnicity, it is only fair to ask how I think it might be done better. At the outset I must repeat the obvious: there is no magic bullet. Ethnicity is a multidimensional phenomena with both phenotypical and cultural dimensions. Individuals may have multiple ethnic identities with varied levels of attachment and these identities may or may not be correlated with any objective characteristics. In spite of these problems I think it is possible to create questionnaire items that will have conceptual clarity and reliable measurement.

There are two dimensions of ethnicity that stand out above all others. The first is an individual's primary identity among the major ethnic groups in a society. The second is an indicator of an individual's descent or ancestry from among a broad range of ethnic groups. Let me explain the rationale behind each of these concepts and illustrate them with some sample questions.

### **Primary Ethnic Identity**

The first dimension addresses the question of why ethnicity is important. According to the prior discussion, ethnicity is important when it has instrumental value (or disvalue) through an association with political, social or economic factors. If the government and other institutions, social groups or individuals use ethnic criteria to provide rewards or access to scarce resources and/or select individuals for participation in formal or informal associations, then ethnicity matters.

This dimension is logically measured only in terms of mutually exclusive assignment among a predetermined list of major ethnic groups. While individuals may have multiple ethnic identities, it is unlikely that policies of inclusion or exclusion can rest on the ambiguity of joint ethnic membership. Consider an American who has one Japanese parent and one White parent. In terms of the issue emphasized there, the question is how the person's life chances are affected by his/her own primary ethnic identity and/or others' perceptions. While the survey or census



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cannot measure others' perceptions, the respondent's primary ethnic identity is probably influenced by how s/he is seen by others. Because the politics of ethnicity in American society is typically based on mutually exclusive membership, I do not see a joint ethnic status as a meaningful category for instrumental purposes. In other societies, however, blended categories such as Eurasian or Mestizo may have a recognized status, both in terms of community identity and in societal perceptions.

The question could be phased as follows:

AMONG THE LIST OF GROUPS LISTED BELOW (OR ON A CARD HANDED TO THE RESPONDENT), WHICH DO YOU CONSIDER THE ONE WHICH IS CLOSEST TO YOUR PRIMARY IDENTITY?

If the respondent claims to not have an ethnic attachment or multiple attachments, the follow-up might be phrased:

YES, I UNDERSTAND. BUT IS THERE ONE GROUP THAT MIGHT BEST DESCRIBE HOW YOU ARE SEEN BY OTHERS?

The selection of groups to be included on the list of choices is the critical aspect of this question. The concept of major groups means that the selection must be limited to groups that are large enough to be visible. Visibility is not based on physical or cultural distinctiveness but on demographic and political criteria. A major group must have some corporate image of themselves and/or been seen by others as a distinct community. For example, the term Asian and Pacific Islander (a U.S. census category) is meaningless because no — one not the groups included nor anyone else — thinks or acts in reference to such a diffuse label. The other key attribute is a minimum population size. Consider, for example, an American who reports his/her primary ethnic identity to be Armenian. Armenian is a perfectly appropriate ethnic category with a distinct historical identity. But the membership in this category is too small to be considered politically important in the United States and thus be subject to preferential and/or discriminatory treatment.

The list of major ethnic categories will vary in different societies and over time in the same society (comparability should be maintained by aggregation of categories). The construction of the list of categories should be based on extensive research using focus groups to select potential categories and then trial surveys to check on recognition of categories. In general, the effort should be to minimize the total number of categories (perhaps excluding those with less than one percent identification of the population) and also to minimize the numbers who claim no primary ethnic identification. This will involve tradeoffs and there may not be a single optimal list of politically important ethnic groups.



## **Ancestry**

The aim behind this concept is to measure the diversity of the population by asking the national or ethnic origins of their ancestors. For some people their primary ethnic identity and ancestry will be the same. But for many others ancestry will reveal varied ethnic roots which may or may not be related to current identification, cultural attributes or physical features. The primary measurement problem will be that most individuals will not know the true ethnic origins of their ancestry beyond their parents and grandparents. However, the question will provide a minimal estimate of the diversity of the ethnic origins of a population.

In addition to being of great public interest, ancestry data can help to clarify the concepts of race and ethnicity. The popular assumption is one of homogeneity of ethnic identity, cultural attributes and other characteristics. However, most research has shown that these relationships are only loosely connected and are subject to considerable flux. It is important to obtain a measure of the complexity of ethnic origins and then to measure the overlap of ancestry, ethnic identity and other ethnic criteria (language use, birthplace, cultural attributes).

In order to spread the net as broadly as possible, the suggested question might be:

THINKING ABOUT YOUR PARENTS, YOUR GRANDPARENTS, AND YOUR ANCESTORS, WHAT NATIONALITIES OR ETHNIC GROUPS ARE REPRESENTED IN YOUR FAMILY'S HISTORY? [The respondent could be prodded with a list of nationality and ethnic groups.]

There should not be any limit on the number of responses that a person should give. It would be preferable if the respondent could rank-order the responses. While this might be possible in a survey, I understand that the time needed to rank-order responses would probably be prohibitive in a population census. An additional problem would be coding a variable number of responses.

## **Conclusion**

Census measures of race and ethnicity originated in an earlier era when assumptions about the biological basis of racial distinctions and firm links between cultural characteristics and ethnicity were taken for granted. Because of revised thinking about these assumptions and the need to provide broader measures of ethnicity, new questions have been added to the United States census (and those in other countries) to identify groups on the basis of identification and ancestry. However, these new measures have, in general, been a disappointment to those who manage the nation's social statistics. The new measures (and the old ones) seem to be full of errors and unexpected complexity. Individuals provide answers that are inconsistent and responses seem to vary enormously with slight changes in the structure of the questions.

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Given this predicament, it seems wise to rethink the concept of ethnicity and review the base of empirical knowledge. My conclusion, after reviewing the literature, is that there is little objective basis for the conventional model of ethnic groups as endogamous populations with distinct cultural or phenotypic characteristics. Extensive patterns of ethnic blending in prehistory and in the modern era mean there is substantial overlap in the ethnic origins (and identities) in almost every population. Moreover, social and cultural change over the last century has resulted in very weak ethnic attachments for many persons in multiethnic societies. These processes are at the root of the problems of measurement of ethnicity.

This does not mean that ethnicity is unimportant in the modern world. Indeed, there is considerable evidence that ethnic divisions continue to be closely associated with political and economic struggles in many countries. Moreover, ethnicity is often a primary base of formal and informal social organization in many multiethnic societies. In spite of the vague boundaries and the overlap of ancestry, there are still core constituencies of many ethnic groups. These groups pursue entitlements from economic and political institutions, struggle for the elimination of discrimination and organize internally to maintain solidarity. Many individuals from these groups seek neighbors, employees, friends and spouses from the pool of co-ethnics.

Given this account of the role of ethnicity in modern societies, any thoughtful strategy for measurement of ethnic attachment must set conceptual priorities. While most questions will allow identification of the core constituency of many groups (particularly for isolated groups), the ethnic composition of those on the margins and those with multiple ancestry will depend on the nature and format of the question. From my vantage point, I see two dimensions of ethnicity as being more important and more measurable than others.

The first, PRIMARY ETHNICITY, is identification with one of the major ethnic groups in a society. Major ethnic groups are defined as groups with a sufficient demographic and political presence to affect a person's life chances. By political factors, I refer to institutional or community practices that assist, retard, include or exclude members of a group. Since such practices are group-specific, a person could only have one primary ethnic attachment. The second dimension, ANCESTRY, refers to the potential diversity of national or ethnic origins of individuals. A person could claim multiple ancestries or none.

What is left out of these concepts is important to acknowledge. Perhaps most important is the omission of any reference to the cultural base of ethnicity. The emphasis here, especially in the first dimension, is on the instrumental aspect of ethnicity. The cultural content of ethnicity may be very important, especially in the maintenance of ethnic solidarity. But ethnic groups can persist without a distinct cultural base or at least with a culture that is very similar to that of other populations. Moreover, censuses and national surveys would not seem to be the best method to collect data on cultural patterns and values. The dimensions here also leave out several of the key objective aspects often used to identify ethnic groups: birthplace, birthplace

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of parents, language of origin and language used at home. Rather than use these criteria to define ethnic groups, it seems preferable to measure the association of these characteristics with ethnicity. This approach would allow for an assessment of the differences between ethnic groups to be separate from the identification of ethnic groups.

A final word on race and ethnicity is necessary. Clearly the idea of race as groups defined on the basis of physical attributes cannot be ignored. While names, dress and even language can be modified, it is all but impossible to change skin color and other physical features that affect perceptions of ethnic identity. However, I am not convinced that censuses should continue to rely on "race" questions which mix ethnic identity with assumptions about physical attributes. If we need data on physical features, it might be useful to try to measure these attributes directly and maintain the concept of ethnicity on the subjective dimensions of identity and ancestry.



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## **Appendix B**

### **Guidelines for Working Groups**





# *Guidelines for Working Groups*

## **Objectives of the Working Group Sessions**

One of the objectives of the conference is to discuss the measurement of ethnicity, and in particular how data needs and the socio-political context affect the design of questionnaires and the collection and interpretation of data. Some of the issues and concerns under both these headings will be presented during the plenary sessions. However, given the diversity of professional interests and experience of the participants, working group sessions have been organized to allow for focussed discussion on a variety of issues related to these topics. Although time and resources do not allow for in-depth presentation of the results of the working group discussions, the details will be incorporated into the proceedings of the conference.

## **Guidelines to Participants**

The working group sessions are geared towards a frank and lively debate on key issues which need to be addressed. The chairs are expected to stimulate and facilitate discussion and to act as animators as well as participants in the discussions. The participants are expected to bring their diverse professional and research interests into the discussions. The following guidelines are presented in order to assist in meeting this challenge.

- ✦ Be aware of the topic to be discussed, i.e. Impact of Data Needs or Socio-political Context.
- ✦ Review the core issues and the assigned supplementary issue for the working group. This does not preclude raising new issues during the discussions since each group is asked to submit one supplementary issue beyond those pre-identified by the conference organizers.
- ✦ Remember that the working group sessions are being taped. Also, remember that a staff member is available to record ideas as they are presented.
- ✦ Please identify yourselves by name when you first speak so that the comments can be attributed to the appropriate individual on the tapes.

The chairs will present a brief summary of the findings of their Groups during the plenary session immediately following the break-out sessions.

## *Guidelines for Working Groups*

### **Structure of the Working Groups**

The Conference includes two working group sessions, one dealing with the impact of data needs and the other dealing with the socio-political context for data on ethnicity. The composition of the groups has been structured to respect linguistic requirements and, to the extent possible, the professional interests of the participants. Each group will be supported by at least one staff member from either Statistics Canada or the U.S. Bureau of the Census. The following table lists the groups, the chairs and the rooms in which they will be meeting.

#### **Working Group Sessions on Impact of Data Needs**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Chair</b>	<b>Room</b>
1	Evelyn Mann	R.H.Coats, 4th floor, room 3
2	Henry Der	R.H.Coats, 4th floor, room 4
3	Robert Hill	R.H.Coats, 12th floor, rooms A & B
4	David Pearce	R.H.Coats, 26th floor, Boardroom
5	Douglas Norris	R.H.Coats, 7th floor, room A
6	Alan Anderson	R.H.Coats, 20th floor, rooms A1 & A2
7	Réjean Lachapelle	Simon Goldberg Room

#### **Working Group Session on the Socio-Political Context**

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1	Matthew Snipp	R.H.Coats, 4th floor, room 3
2	Gordon Priest	R.H.Coats, 26th floor, Boardroom
3	John Kromkowski	R.H.Coats, 4th floor, room 4
4	Leo Driedger	R.H.Coats, 12th floor, rooms A & B
5	Jacques Henripin	Simon Goldberg Room
6	Arthur Cresce	R.H.Coats, 7th floor, room A
7	Sange de Silva	R.H.Coats, 16th floor, rooms A & B
8	Roderick Harrison	R.H.Coats, 20th floor, rooms A1 & A2

### **Logistics**

Maps indicating the working group assignments and the location of the rooms in which each group will meet are included in the kits.

In order to maximize the time available for discussion, one of the working group sessions is scheduled over lunch on day 2 of the Conference. A cold buffet lunch will be provided in each of the meeting rooms. Delegates are asked to help themselves to the food service and proceed immediately to the discussions.

### **Issues - Working Group on Impact of Data Needs**

All working groups are asked to address the following *core* issues.

1. What should be the primary legislative, program, research and community data needs? Is a question on race needed to meet these data needs? How should conflicts between legislative, research, community and program data needs be resolved?
2. How should ethnicity, race, ancestry and/or identity be defined?
3. Is the census an appropriate vehicle to collect data on ethnicity? What level of detail is appropriate for the classification of ethnic data? What should be the level of geographic disaggregation?

In addition, each working group is asked to deal with one of the following supplementary issues, according to their assignment. Please make every effort to focus the discussions on your assigned issues since time is a precious commodity for this conference.

4. Groups 1 and 2  
Should we (Statistical Agencies) meet all needs for data on ethnicity? How should we reconcile conflicting definitions? Are these data more suitably collected by the communities themselves?
5. Groups 3 and 4  
Does the collection of data on race/ethnicity reinforce stereotypes and divisiveness? If so, is there an alternative approach for meeting data needs?
6. Group 5  
Who should be consulted to determine data needs? Should collection vehicles include questions for targeted groups?



## ***Guidelines for Working Groups***

7. Group 6

Is comparability over time more important than relevance at a given point in time?

8. Group 7

Is the issue of multiple ethnicities as mixed statistical classifications resolvable?

### **Issues - Working Group on Socio-Political Context**

All working groups are asked to address the following *core* issues.

1. Is it possible to obtain reliable data on race and ethnicity when racial and ethnic identities are changing? Is the quality of the data defensible? How do geographic and cultural factors affect the quality of data on race and ethnicity?
2. Do political or legal definitions of race and ethnicity drive or affect the racial/ethnic classifications? To what extent should political pressure affect the question(s)? What should the balance be between political forces and research on the way the questions are asked?
3. For respondents, is race/ethnicity relevant? Are the boundaries between ethnic groups becoming unclear so as to obscure the classification? What is the impact of the respondent's perception on the quality of the data?
4. Are race and ethnic categories too subjective and too ill-defined for meaningful comparative analysis?

In addition, each working group is asked to deal with one of the following supplementary issues, according to their assignment.

5. Groups 1 and 2

What can we (Statistical Agencies) do to improve the communication of the complexity of measuring race/ethnicity to users, researchers and respondents?

6. Groups 3 and 4

How is the changing political structure of the world affecting current efforts at collection of data on ethnicity versus ethnic data?

7. Groups 5 and 6

Should racial/ethnic categories be influenced by demographic factors such as immigration?

## *Guidelines for Working Groups*

8. Group 7

How should data on ethnicity be dealt with in the justice system?

*Because of the special nature of this topic, this session will include a panel discussion on the sensitivities and conflicts in collecting data on ethnicity in the Justice System.*

9. Group 8

How should data on ethnicity be dealt with in health statistics?

# WORKING GROUPS - Impact of Data Needs

1	2	3	4
(R.H.C., 4 <sup>th</sup> floor, room 3)	(R.H.C., 4 <sup>th</sup> floor, room 4)	(R.H.C., 12 <sup>th</sup> floor, rooms A & B)	(R.H.C., 26 <sup>th</sup> floor, Boardroom)
Champion, Harry *	Berry, John	Anderson, Carl	Badets, Jane
Choldin, Harvey	Butz, William	Boyd, Monica	Bobo, Lawrence
Cornish, John	Caplan, Tom *	Dang, Mai	Bondarskaya, Galina
Cresce, Arthur	Coombs, John	Duong, Duc Hong	Cohen, Ronald
Isajiw, Wsevolod	de Weaver, Norman	Estrada, Leo	Golden, Patricia
Jackson, James	Der, Henry **	Frideres, James	Henderson, Rick
Lapham, Susan	Dumas, Jean	Goldscheider, Calvin	Jojola, Theodore
Lieberson, Stanley	Farley, Reynolds	Harley, Diana *	Keefe, Susan
Lott, Juanita	Halli, Shivalingappa	Hill, Robert **	McDaniel, Susan
Mann, Evelyn **	Khoo, Teik Huat	Hirschman, Charles	Pearce, David **
McPhie, Paul	Kralt, John	Johnson, Robert	Priest, Gordon
Michalowski, Margaret	Liu, William	Longoria, Salvador	Ram, Bali *
Miskura, Susan	Murray, Scott	Paisano, Edna Lee	Rudko, Krystyna
Reed, Paul	Petrie, Bruce	Samuel, John	Salo, Matt
Rodriguez, Clara	Plant, Mark	Tidwell, William	van Meurs, Erika
Sullivan, Teresa	Smith, Tom	Trevethan, Shelley	

\*\* Chair / Président(e)

\* Resource person / Personne-ressource



# WORKING GROUPS - Impact of Data Needs - Concluded

## 5 (R.H.C., 7<sup>th</sup> floor, room A)

Baxter, Rick  
de Silva, Sange  
Doob, Anthony  
Joseph, Rachael  
Kobayashi, Audrey  
Kromkowski, John  
McKenney, Nampeo  
Norris, Douglas \*\*  
Rolark, Stanley \*  
Samhan, Helen  
Stiffarm, Lenora  
Thomas, Derrick  
Torczynner, James  
White, Philip

## 6 (R.H.C., 20<sup>th</sup> floor, rooms A1 & A2)

Almey, Marcia  
Anderson, Alan \*\*  
Boxhill, Wally \*  
del Pinal, Jorge  
deVries, John  
Driedger, Leo  
Geschwender, James  
Harrison, Roderick  
Harrison, Brian  
Jones, Shirley  
Schneider, Paula  
Stolarik, Mark  
Waters, Mary  
Weinfeld, Morton  
Woltman, Henry

## 7

### (Simon Goldberg Room)

Bryce-Laporte, Roy  
Chicha, Marie-Thérèse  
Gagné, Madeleine  
Goldmann, Gustave  
Henripin, Jacques  
Juteau, Danielle  
Lachapelle, Réjean \*\*  
Laroche, Benoît  
Levin, Michael  
Paillé, Michel  
Piché, Victor  
Raby, Ronald \*  
Renaud, Viviane  
Royce, Don  
Saram, P.  
Snipp, Matthew  
Tonry, Michael  
White, Pamela

- \*\* Chair / Président(e)
- \* Resource person / Personne-ressource

## WORKING GROUPS - Socio-political Context

1	2	3	4
(R.H.C., 4 <sup>th</sup> floor, room 3)	(R.H.C., 26 <sup>th</sup> floor, Boardroom)	(R.H.C., 4 <sup>th</sup> floor, room 4)	(R.H.C., 12 <sup>th</sup> floor, rooms A & B)
Caplan, Tom	Berry, John	Bobo, Lawrence	Almey, Marcia
Cornish, John	Goldmann, Gustave	Boyd, Monica	Bondarskaya, Galina
de Weaver, Norman	Hill, Robert	Butz, William	Driedger, Leo **
del Pinal, Jorge	Johnson, Robert	Dang, Mai	Duong Duc, Hong
Der, Henry	Jones, Shirley	Estrada, Leo	Farley, Reynolds
Keefe, Susan	Joseph, Rachael	Goldscheider, Calvin	Jackson, James
Lott, Juanita	Lapham, Susan *	Hirschman, Charles	Kobayashi, Audrey
Michalowski, Margaret *	McKenney, Nampeo	Isajiw, Wsevolod	Liu, William
Norris, Douglas	Murray, Scott	Jojoba, Theodore	Miskura, Susan
Reed, Paul	Paisano, Edna Lee	Kralt, John	Pearce, David
Rodriguez, Clara	Priest, Gordon **	Kromkowski, John **	Raby Ronald
Rolark, Stanley	Torczyner, James	Levin, Michael *	Rudko, Krystyna
Snipp, Matthew **	Waters, Mary	Ram, Bali	Salo, Matt *
Thomas, Derrick	Weinfeld, Morton	Royce, Don	Schneider, Paula
		Stiffarm, Lenora	Smith, Tom
			Stolarik, Mark
			van Meurs, Erika
			White, Pamela

\*\* Chair / Président(e)

\* Resource person / Personne-ressource

# WORKING GROUPS - Socio-political Context - Concluded

5

(Simon Goldberg Room)

Boxhill, Wally  
Bryce-Laporte, Roy  
Dumas, Jean \*  
Gagné, Madeleine  
Harrison, Brian  
Henripin, Jacques \*\*  
Juteau, Danielle  
Lachapelle, Réjean  
Laroche, Benoit  
Paillé, Michel  
Piché, Victor  
Renaud, Viviane  
Sullivan, Teresa

6

(R.H.C., 7<sup>th</sup> floor, room A)

Anderson, Alan  
Badets, Jane \*  
Choldin, Harvey  
Cohen, Ronald  
Cresce, Arthur \*\*  
de Vries, John  
Frideres, James  
Henderson, Rick  
Khoo, Teik Huat  
McDaniel, Susan  
Samhan, Helen  
Samuel, John

7

(R.H.C., 16<sup>th</sup> floor, rooms A & B)

Anderson, Carl  
Chicha, Marie-Thérèse  
de Silva, Sange \*\*  
Doob, Anthony  
Geschwender, James  
Longoria, Salvador  
McPhie, Paul \*  
Petrie, Bruce  
Plant, Mark  
Saram, P.  
Tonry, Michael  
Treveltham, Shelley

8

(R.H.C., 20<sup>th</sup> floor, rooms A1 & A2)

Baxter, Rick  
Champion, Harry  
Coombs, John  
Golden, Patricia  
Halli, Shivalingappa  
Harley, Diana  
Harrison, Roderick \*\*  
Lieberson, Stanley  
Mann, Evelyn  
Tidwell, William  
White, Philip  
Woltman, Henry \*

\*\* Chair / Président(e)

\* Resource person / Personne-ressource





## **Appendix C**

### **Conference Agenda**





# Conference Agenda

## Day 1

8:15 - 8:45	Refreshments
8:45 - 9:15	Welcome of Conference Participants: Ivan Fellegi, Statistics Canada Outline of the Purpose of the Conference: Barbara Bryant, United States Bureau of the Census
9:15 - 9:45	Keynote Address: Stanley Lieberman, Harvard University Moderator: Bruce Petrie, Statistics Canada
9:45 - 10:00	Open Discussion Moderator: Bruce Petrie
10:00 - 10:30	Refreshments
10:30 - 12:15	National Experiences in the Measurement of Ethnicity Moderator: William Butz, United States Bureau of the Census Presenters: Nampeo McKenney and Arthur Cresce, United States Bureau of the Census Pamela White and Viviane Renaud, Statistics Canada Discussants: John Samuel, Carleton University and Reynolds Farley, University of Michigan
12:15 - 13:15	Lunch
13:15 - 15:00	National Experience (Cont'd) Moderator: William Butz Presenters: David Pearce and Philip White, United Kingdom John Cornish, Australia Teik Huat Khoo, Malaysia Galina Bondarskaya, Soviet Union
15:00 - 15:30	Refreshments
15:30 - 16:30	Open Discussion Moderator: William Butz
16:30 - 17:00	Summary/Wrap-up: William Butz
17:00 - 18:30	Reception at Statistics Canada

## *Conference Agenda*

### **Day 2**

- 8:15 - 8:45 Refreshments
- 8:45 - 9:00 Introductory Remarks to Day 2: William Butz
- 9:00 - 10:15  
Papers: The Meanings and Dimensions of Ethnicity  
Presenters: Ronald Cohen, University of Florida  
Calvin Golscheider, Brown University  
Wsevolod Isajiw, University of Toronto  
Chair/Discussant: John de Vries, Carleton University
- 10:15 - 10:30 Refreshments
- 10:30 - 11:30 Open Discussion, Chair: John de Vries
- 11:30 - 12:30  
Papers: Impact of Data Needs  
Presenters: Gustave Goldmann, Statistics Canada  
Jorge del Pinal, Bureau of the Census  
Madeleine Gagné, Cultural Community and Immigration, Government of Québec  
Chair: Juanita Lott, Tamayo Lott Association
- 12:30 - 14:15  
Working Groups: Impact of Data Needs  
Chairs: Evelyn Mann, New York City Planning  
Henry Der, Chinese for Affirmative Action  
Robert Hill, Morgan State University  
David Pearce, United Kingdom  
Douglas Norris, Statistics Canada  
Alan Anderson, University of Saskatchewan  
Réjean Lachapelle, Statistics Canada
- 15:00 - 15:30 Refreshments
- 15:30 - 16:30  
Papers: Socio-political Context  
Presenters: Leobardo Estrada, University of California at Berkeley  
Audrey Kobayashi, McGill University  
Chair: Tom Smith, National Opinion Research Center
- 16:30 - 17:45  
Working Groups: Socio-political Context  
Chairs: Matthew Snipp, University of Wisconsin  
Gordon Priest, Statistics Canada  
John Kromkowski, National Center for Urban Ethnic Affairs  
Leo Driedger, University of Manitoba  
Jacques Henripin, University of Montréal  
Arthur Cresce, Bureau of the Census  
Sange de Silva, Statistics Canada  
Roderick Harrison, Bureau of the Census
- Evening Reception sponsored by the Canadian Population Society

**Day 3**

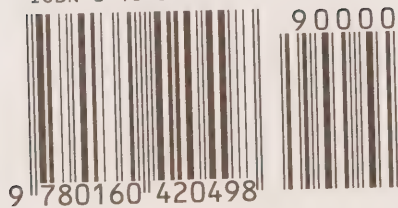
8:30 - 9:00	Refreshments
9:00 - 9:15	Introductory Remarks to Day 3: Bruce Petrie
9:15 - 10:00	Reports of Working Groups on the Socio-political Context Chair: Gustave Goldmann
10:00 - 10:30	Refreshments
10:30 - 12:00	Papers: Focus of the Future Presenters: Monica Boyd, Carleton University Charles Hirschman, University of Washington Chair/Discussant: Mary Waters, Harvard University
12:00 - 13:00	Lunch
13:00 - 14:00	Open Discussion Chair: Paula Schneider, Bureau of the Census
14:00 - 15:00	Report of Rapporteurs: Lawrence Bobo, University of California at Berkeley, and Teresa Sullivan, University of Texas
15:00 - 16:00	Conclusion: Bruce Petrie and William Butz







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